Rules of the Armed Forces Day commemorative poem contest announced

YANGON, 18 Aug — Hailing the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day which falls on 27 March 2005, the Poem Contest Organizing Sub-committee under the Poem and Arts Competition Organizing Work Committee, chaired by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, announced to hold the Poem Contest to mark the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day.

The contestants can present objectives of the 60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day, matters related to fine traditions of the Tatmadaw, historic events occurred in the periods of Konbaung Era (AD 1824), Independence Era (1948-1988) and the State Peace and Development Council, endeavours of the State Peace and Development Council in religious affairs, construction, peace negotiation and drug elimination sectors.

The entries will be scrutinized with three sectors—theme style of presentation and composing.

The poem contest will be divided into two categories Those who won first second or third prizes in the Poem Contest to mark the Armed Forces Day and the National Moto Contest, Sarpy Beikman Manuscript Award Con-
test and the poem contest of the Pakokku U Ohn Pe Lit-

erary Award Contest and National Literary Award win-

ners may participate in the level-1 and those who did not

win the prizes may take part in the level-2. Those who
did not win the prizes can participate in the level-1. However, one contestant may take part in one level only and the level number must be written on the entry. There will be two events at the level-1—the long poem and the short poem. The contestant can participate in both or one of them. However, it must be one entry for one event. The short poem must be between 100 and 300 stanzas and the long one between 1,000 and 2,000 stanzas. The entries must be in line with the rules. The free verse and modern poems will not be accepted.

The poem must be written on one side of paper and the two copies of the entry must be submitted. And, the entry must be attached with name of the contestant, pen NAME, names of parents, education, occupation and ad-
dress together with three 2" x 2.5" size colour photos. The entry must be own creation and has not featured in any book yet. The State has authority to use the prize-

winning works. The entries are to be sent to Lt-Col Ohn Maung (Retd) (Myinmu Maung Naing Moe), Chief Edi-
tor, Naingngan Gonyi Literary House, Sarpy Beikman,
531, Merchant Street, here, Tel: 374532, not later than
31-1-2005.

Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung sees off Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung and party at the airport.—MNA

CITES experts meeting continues for second day

YANGON, 18 Aug — The second-day session of the Third Meeting of the ASEAN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, jointly conducted by the Ministry of Forestry and ASEAN Secretariat, was held at Sedona Hotel here today.

Director-General of Forest Department U Soe Win Maung acted as chairman of the meeting and Ms Atty Annalizar A Vitug of the Philippines as vice-chairman.

The experts attending the meeting discussed matters relating to 12 proposals on restrictions on wild flora and fauna which will be submitted to 13th meeting of CITES member countries in Bangkok, Thailand, in October 2004.
PERSPECTIVES

Thursday, 19 August, 2004

Accelerate momentum of rural development work

The Government of Myanmar has been implementing development project, especially the development project, for border areas and national races, the 24-region development plan and the five rural development tasks for bringing a harmonious development to the entire Union.

Most the population of the Union of Myanmar live in rural areas and the main industry of rural people is agriculture and livestock breeding.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe on one occasion gave guidance on development of rural areas. He said that transport and communications, water supply and agriculture are the major requirements for rural development and it is necessary to encourage livestock breeding in addition to agriculture, the main economy of the rural areas.

In accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, roads linking villages and towns and bridges are being built one after another. For rural development, the tasks for improving transport and communications, supplying sufficient water for agricultural and drinking purposes, raising the standard of rural people, providing wider health care services and developing rural economy should be given top priority.

As the Government is fulfilling all the requirements for the development of rural areas, wellwishers, local people and social organizations, on their part, are enthusiastically lending themselves to rural development tasks.

Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than of the Ministry of Defence on 9 August attended the ceremony to mark the completion of cultivation work for 2004-2005 and to demonstrate the use of the direct seeding machine in Mayin village in Bago Division. During his visit to Bago Division, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than attached the importance of the Recycled bio gas electric power station in Baingda village in Nyaymgyaybin township. The station with a 100-hp engine has the capacity of producing 50 kilowatts and can supply electricity to more than 300 households in the village. The small electric power station is the result of cooperation between local people and the Union Solidarity and Development Association of Nyuanglaybin Township.

At a time when rural development tasks are being carried out in accordance with the guidance of the Head of State, we would like to call on wellwishers, local people and social organizations to cooperate with the Government in all the national endeavours including rural development.

Annual meeting of MCF to be held on 28 Aug

Yangon, 18 Aug — The annual meeting of the Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF), the Myanmar Computer Scientists Association (MCSA), the Myanmar Computer Industrialists Association (MCIA) and the Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association (MCEA) and the Myanmar Computer Federation (MCF), the Myanmar Department (Yangon City) U Aye Kyu and officials exhibition was held at BEPS-7 in Tamway Township here on Thursday, 19 August. — MNA

School Health Week exhibition

Yangon, 18 Aug — The School Health Week exhibition was held at BEPS-7 in Tamway Township here on 13 August. Director-General of No 3 Basic Education Department (Yangon City) U Aye Kyu and officials viewed round the exhibition. — 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

Minister attends launching of Indian Film Week

Yangon, 18 Aug — The Indian Film Week was launched at Nay Pyi Daw Cinema on Sule Pagoda Road, here, at 6.30 pm today attended by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, departmental heads under the Ministry of Information, Ambassadors and charges d’affaires of the foreign missions in Yangon, resident representatives of UN agencies and officials, embassy staff of the Indian Embassy to Myanmar, officials of the Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise and Myanmar Motion Picture Association and guests.

First, Indian Ambassador Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhatia presented bouquet to Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and extended greetings. Next, Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan delivered an address.

Later, the Mother India film was shown to the audience. The Indian Film Week will be held up to 24 August. During the period of the film week, Indian films will be presented at Nay Pyi Daw Cinema. — MNA

Cash donations invited for Maha Ratthabhi Samaggi Pagoda in Panglong

Yangon, 18 Aug — As the symbol of unity and consolidation of national brethren of the Union of Myanmar, the Maha Ratthabhi Samaggi Pagoda has been built on Vikasini Hill in Panglong, Lashio Division, Shan State (South).

Wellwishers can make cash donations for golden umbrella to be hoisted atop the pagoda and nine Buddha Images with different mudras (hand postures). A ceremony to make cash donations will be held at Vijaya Mingala Hall on Kaba Aye hilltop here on 1 pm on 24 August, it is learnt. — MVA

Hole-in-one scored at Dawei Golf Club

Yangon, 18 Aug — U Pe Lwin (Dawei Golf Club), together with his partners Maj Shwe Pyi Hein, U Yu Sein and U Htay Win, scored hole-in-one at the 11th hole of Dawei Golf Club on 15 August. MNA

Lecture on national policy given

Yangon, 18 Aug — Union Solidarity and Development Association Central Executive Committee member Deputy Minister for Information U Thein Sein gave lectures on National Policy and seven-step road map to 100 trainees of USDA executive management course No 15 of Dalla Township USDA in Yangon (South) District this afternoon. — MVA

Commerce Minister inspects rice reprocessing plant

Yangon, 18 Aug —Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, accompanied by Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Tun, inspected No 282 Rice Reprocessing Plant in Hlinetha Township this morning.

Next, the minister gave instructions to the officials. They also looked into the shade trees, landscaping trees, plantations, nurseries, paddy fields, livestock breeding farm and fish breeding ponds and left instructions on speeding up the agriculture and livestock breeding tasks. — MNA

Soccer team leaves for SRV

Yangon, 18 Aug —The Myanmar soccer team led by U Wai Yan Aung left here by air this morning for Ho Chi Minh, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, to participate in IGF Trophy Soccer Tournament to be held from 20 to 28 August.

The team was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Paton of Myanmar Football Federation Vice-Chief of Military Intelligence Maj-Gen Kyaw Win, officials of the Ministry of Sports, President of the MFF U Win Aung and executives, and their family members. The team comprises 26 members — seven members of the administrative body, a football referee and 18 players. — MVA

Advertising Division (Mandalay Branch) opens

Yangon, 18 Aug — The Advertising Division (Mandalay Branch) was opened on 15 August 2004 for those wishing to place their advertisements in Myanmar Alin, Kyemon and the New Light of Myanmar dailies published by the News and Periodicals Enterprise. Those who wish to put their advertisements or supplementary advertisement sheets may contact Mandalay Sub-Printing House between 20th and 21st Streets and 82nd and 83rd Streets in Aungmyathazan Town- ship, Mandalay, (Tel: 02-32729 or 02-39935). — MNA

Navy形象

Yangon, 18 Aug —The Ayeyawady and Chindwin Rivers are raging now because of the downpours. With a view to ensuring safety of vessels sailing under the bridges across these rivers, the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems has launched navigational stations near the facilities so as to provide them with navigational facts and present situations of the waters.

A navigational station each has been built at Shwekyetet for Sagaing Bridge, on Lanya Bank for Anawrahta Bridge in Chunk, near Myathalan Pagoda for Magway Bridge, at Mya Village for Nawady Bridge in Pyay, at Sakkaw for Bo Myat Tun Bridge and at Ahlet Taloklat for Maubin Bridge along the Ayeyawady River, and at Ahlet for Monywa Bridge and at Aungmyat for Hsinbyushin Bridge along the Chindwin River.

The Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems today announced that the vessels moving downstream the rivers are to get navigational facts from respective stations. — MNA
US casualty figure in Iraq sharply rises to 943

Baghdad, 18 Aug—As of Tuesday, 17 August, 943 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the Defence Department. Of those, 703 died as a result of hostile action and 240 died of non-hostile causes.

Soldiers and Marines have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that the British military has been co-developers of the project.

The relics include crafted stone axes from the Old Stone Age, earthenware with a comb-tooth pattern from the Stone Age, and that of Joseon Dynasty in the 15th century. During the survey, led by the Land Museum, which is owned by Korea Land, the archaeologists discovered relics and historic remains from the construction site of an industrial park in Kaesong, North Korea’s border town, reported South Korean news agency on Monday. The latest identifications reported by the military: — A US soldier was killed Monday in a series of grenade and explosives attacks in eastern Baghdad. — A Marine was killed in action Tuesday in Anbar Province. The relics found in Kaesong industrial park construction site

British soldier killed in Basra

Baghdad, 17 Aug—A British soldier has been killed and another injured after clashes with militants in the Iraqi city of Basra, the Ministry of Defence said. Further details would be withheld until next of kin have been informed, according to an MoD statement.

British troops have been battling Shia militia thought to be loyal to radical Iraqi cleric Moqtada Sadr. The incident follows the roadside bombing of three British civilian vehicles in Basra.

A UK forces spokesman confirmed three vehicles were damaged and said there were no reports of injuries.

Toyota to begin local production for developing regions

Tokyo, 17 Aug—Japan’s Toyota Motor Corp is about to launch a project to locally produce pickup trucks and multipurpose vehicles for markets in developing regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the company said Monday.

The project to manufacture “international multipurpose vehicles,” or IMVs, will begin in Thailand this summer, it said.

The largest Japanese auto maker produces about 200,000 vehicles a year at its two plants in Thailand.

The IMV project aims at manufacturing pickup trucks and vehicles that can carry a large number of people.

Toyota will then begin an IMV project in Indonesia in September, and one in South Africa and one in Argentina in 2005.

Output under the IMV programme is targeted at 50,000 units for 2006, compared with Toyota’s plan to produce more than seven million vehicles in the world in 2004.

Toyota relies heavily on the North American market for its profits. With the IMV programme, Toyota intends to create a new manufacturing structure to make low-cost vehicles with high local content responsive to local needs.

According to the auto maker, almost all the parts for IMVs to be produced in Thailand will be procured from suppliers in Southeast Asia.
Some groups of Americans growing skeptical of Iraq war effort

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug—Nine months of chaos and casualties in Iraq since Saddam Hussein’s capture have taken a heavy toll on American opinion of President Bush’s decision to go to war.

Last December, when Saddam was caught, public support for Bush’s decision to go to war was 2-to-1 in favour. Now the public is evenly divided on whether the war was the right thing to do or whether it was a mistake.

Older people, minorities, people with lower incomes, residents of the Northeast and Catholics are among those increasingly skeptical of the war effort, according to Associated Press polling.

These shifts in public sentiment reflect the difficulties in Iraq — including a death toll nearing 1,000 US soldiers, the violent insurgency against the new Iraqi government and US forces and the failure to find weapons of mass destruction, which was among the central justifications for Bush’s decision to go to war.

“It was a mistake,” said 73-year-old Mil Jenkins, a retired schoolteacher and a Democrat from Dickinson, ND. “There were no weapons of mass destruction. I don’t think the world is any safer. Everyone doesn’t think our way of life is the right way.

“It’s arrogant of us to go into a country and tell them what kind of government to have.”

Both Democrats and independents lost enthusiasm for the war during the period since Saddam was captured.

Jordanian hostage freed in Iraq—Jazeera TV

DUBAI, 17 Aug — Iraqi police said a Jordanian hostage had been released in Iraq, Arabic television Al Jazeera reported on Tuesday.

The satellite channel was quoting the chief of police in Kerbala, 68 miles southwest of Baghdad, and said the hostage was an employee of Jordan National Bank.

It did not give his name or further details.

Militant groups in Iraq have kidnapped dozens of foreign hostages to pressure allies of the United States and foreign firms to withdraw from Iraq. Some hostages have been killed and others released unharmed.

Two Jordanians were among five Middle Eastern truck drivers held hostage in Iraq and freed earlier this month. The two had been held for two weeks by militants demanding their company stop working with the US military in Iraq.

Armed Iraqis freed four other Jordanian hostages in a raid on their captors’ hide-out this month. — Internet

Singapore launches Lee Kuan Yew public policy school

SINGAPORE, 17 Aug—Singapore on Monday launched the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYP SPP) at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Speaking at the launching ceremony, Singapore’s Minister for Education Tharman Shanmugartanam said that the school will strive to become a global centre of excellence in the study of public policy.

“I expect that it will develop expertise in a range of areas relevant to Asian nations, ranging from the study of industrial and trade policies, financial regulation and monetary management, the restructuring of state-owned enterprises and agricultural reform, health and education, transport policies and international arrangements to boost collective prosperity,” said the minister.

He said that the LKYP SPP has been established as an autonomous school within NUS, and represents a microcosm of university autonomy.

Lee Kuan Yew, founding father of Singapore, is now senior mentor of the island state’s new Cabinet led by his son, Lee Hsien Loong, who was sworn in as Singapore’s third Prime Minister last week.

Beijing to ensure compulsory education for migrant children

BEIJING, 18 August — China’s capital Beijing has vowed to ensure equal opportunities for all migrants’ children to receive at least nine years of education.

The Beijing municipal government is attempting to ensure that another 99,200 are going to small-scale private schools that are run by migrant workers exclusively for the migrant children, according to Long Ximin, deputy secretary of the Beijing Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

By the end of July, Beijing had reported 286,400 migrant children, 235,000 of whom were from the country’s rural areas. Long told a working conference on primary and secondary school education Monday.

Some 189,100 of these children are going to small-scale private schools that are run by migrant workers exclusively for the migrant children, according to Long. He said Beijing presently has 299 such migrant schools, most of which are located on the city’s outskirts where large numbers of migrant workers live.

However, only 13 of these small, inexpensive schools are up to the standards set by Beijing’s education authorities in terms of facilities as well as the number and qualification of teachers. — MNA/Xinhua

Thailand turns state-run MCOT into public company limited

BANGKOK, 18 August — The state-run Mass Communication Organization of Thailand (MCOT) has been legally registered as a new public company limited.

A ceremony in which the Department of Business Development presented a company registration document to the newly-established MCOT Public Company Limited was held Tuesday afternoon at the company’s operational building here. Chairman of the company’s board, Rewat Chanchalerm, was quoted by the Thai News Agency as saying that the general public would mostly benefit from the conversion of the then state-run MCOT to the new public company limited.

The conversion signals MCOT’s change to become a modernized media firm in all aspects, he noted. Rewat noted the MCOT had actually changed, phase by phase, to become a modernized media firm since November 6, 2003 when the then state-run MCOT launched its “modernine TV” initiative with the introduction of the new logo for TV channel 9, now widely known as “Modernine TV”, and “new looks” of its programmes.

Meanwhile, the MCOT Director-General, Mingkwan Sangsawong, said that the MCOT would launch the Modernine TV’s phase 5 on September 6. MCOT’s conversion to the new public company limited is part of the state-run MCOT’s privatization plan. It is expected that the new company will be listed on the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) in September-October.

Earlier, Mingkwan told journalists that the key reason the MCOT has to be privatized is that it needs to enhance its competitiveness and potential by expanded capitalization to serve its growing projects amid intense competition in the industry both locally and abroad. — MNA/Xinhua

Singapore Airlines carries more passengers in July

SINGAPORE, 17 Aug—Singapore Airlines (SIA), the island state’s national carrier, carried more passengers and cargo in July from a year ago.

According to a statement by the airline on Monday, the SIA flew 1.4 million passengers and cargo in July from a year ago.

The airline’s cargo unit has expanded its operating fleet to 14 aircraft with the delivery of a new 747-400 freighter, and such expansion will allow SIA Cargo to increase services to China and India from September.

Currently, SIA Cargo, Asia’s biggest freight carrier by traffic, offers services to 68 cities in 36 countries and regions. — MNA/Xinhua

American soldiers patrol the streets of the besieged city of Najaf, in southern Iraq on 17 Aug, 2004. — Internet

US Army tanks make their way through the old city of Najaf on 17 Aug, 2004. The heart of Najaf was engulfed in fierce fighting as delegates from Iraq national conference arrived on a mission to coax Shiite militia leader Moqtada Sadr into abandoning his stronghold in the holy city. — Internet
Iran asks UN to intervene to end Najaf bloodshed

**United Nations, 17 Aug** — Predominantly Shiite Muslim Iran has asked the United Nations to help stop the bloodshed in Iraq’s holy city of Najaf, a holy site of particular significance to Shiites everywhere, a UN spokesman said on Monday.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is willing to intervene if asked by both sides in the fighting — Iraq’s interim government which is backed by a US-dominated multinational force, and the Mehdi militia of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the spokesman Fred Eckhard said.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi telephoned Annan over the weekend to ask him “to do whatever he could do to defuse the situation” in Najaf, where Shi’ite militiamen and their supporters were battling US troops, Eckhard said.

“The Secretary-General’s position on that is that he is prepared to play a facilitating role if it can help and if all sides agree to it,” he said.

The fighting in Najaf has killed hundreds and undermined the authority of Iraq’s new interim government.

The two sides have also battled in a Shiite slum in Baghdad, and there have been protests by Sadr supporters in a number of other Iraqi cities.

However, Najaf is revered among Shiite Muslims around the world as the home of the golden-domed shrine of Imam Ali bin Ali Talib, which stands in the heart of the ancient town. Imam Ali was the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Mohammad and his tomb is marked by the Imam Ali Mosque.

Annan first offered UN help in ending the conflict on August 7. But Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi quickly rejected that offer, UN officials said.

Sadr has also showed little interest in a compromise, vowing to fight to the death. Iraq political and religious leaders meeting in Baghdad over the weekend to pick an interim national assembly agreed to send a delegation to Najaf to try to end the fighting, however, and an aide said the cleric would meet with them.

But while the deal was being arranged travel to Najaf, fierce fighting raged on in the heart of the city as US forces backed by tanks exchanged fire with militiamen entrenched around the sacred Imam Ali Mosque and an ancient cemetery.

**MENA/Reuters**

**Sistani worried about violence in Najaf**

**London, 17 Aug** — Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq’s most influential Shiite cleric who is undergoing medical treatment in London, is worried about violence in Najaf and wants to return as soon as he can, his spokesman said on Monday.

“He has been worrying and is deeply concerned about what is happening in Iraq in the last few days,” a spokesman for Sistani in London told Reuters.

“He intends to return to Iraq as soon as possible.”

Hundreds have died in the fighting, which has been particularly fierce in the holy city of Najaf, where Sistani lives.

The spokesman said exactly when the Muslim cleric returned would depend on doctors’ advice. He came to London on August 6 and had an operation to unblock a coronary artery in a London hospital last week. Sistani also underwent eye surgery on Monday.

“We know that he has come out of the operation he had on his eye and there have been no problems, everything seems to be all right,” a source close to the cleric told Reuters. No further details of the operation were available.

**MENA/Reuters**

**25 kilos of drugs seized on Iraqi-Jordanian border**

**Baghdad, 17 Aug** — The Jordanian Customs seized 25 kilos of narco Teacher on Sunday the Jordanian Karama border point abutting Iraq, local Al-Mashrik newspaper reported Monday.

Dharrin Al Fawaz, head of the Customs at the Jordanian Karama border point, said that the Customs officers foiled an attempt to smuggle hashish in one of the Iraqi cars that a group of men tried to take through the borders.

**MENA/Xinhua**

**Thai national science week to be held**

**Bangkok, 17 Aug** — The annual “National Week of Science” will be held from August 18-21 at the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST).

Various activities will be held during the exhibition, the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST) director Pisan Soydhurum was quoted by the Thai News Agency as saying Sunday.

**MENA/Xinhua**

**Turkey, Iraq pledge cooperation on security, trade**

**Ankara, 17 Aug** — Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer and his visiting Iraqi counterpart Chazi al-Yawar vowed on Monday to rein in kidnappings targeting Turkish drivers and further promote bilateral economic and trade ties.

They made the pledge at a joint press conference after al-Yawar kicked off a two-day official visit to Turkey on bilateral cooperations in security and trade.

Sezer said these hostage-taking were directly affecting not only Iraqi people but also foreigners who work in the country to help Iraq back on its feet.

“Attacks against Turkish citizens working in Iraq and attempts to take them hostages increased Turkey’s concerns,” Sezer said.

Sezer also said overall Turkish truck drivers were taken hostages in Iraq by militants bent on forcing their foreign employers to quit the country. Sezer expressed hope that the Iraqi situation would stabilize as soon as possible, adding that Turkey was employing all diplomatic means to assure security and stability in the region, especially in Iraq.

On economic and trade ties, Sezer said “Iraq is one of our prominent trading partners. We believe that al-Yawar’s visit will further improve our economic and trade relations.”

“Terrorism forces will continue their operations in whatever form they take in Iraq. We will not condone survival of any organization on its territory which poses a threat to the security of its neighbors,” the President said.

Sezer also said, adding that “securing transport and trade was one of our main goals.”

“Turkey will support all steps to be taken by the Iraqi interim government in order to create an Iraq living in peace, unity and stability. Turkey will help Iraqi people in this process,” the President said.

Al-Yawar, on his part, said that Iraq would not condone any organization which attempts to block the development of its economy.

**MENA/PTI**

**Tata steel acquires NalSteel of Singapore for 13.3 billion rupees**

**Mumbai, 17 Aug** — India steel major Tata Iron and Steel Company Ltd Monday signed an agreement to acquire the steel business of NalSteel Ltd for 13.3 billion rupees which would also enable the Tata Group company access to the Asian market.

The Singapore-based company is spin-off its entire steel business into a wholly owned subsidiary, NalSteel Asia Pvt Ltd (NalSteel Asia). Subsequently TataSteel would acquire the company, Tata Steel managing director B Muthuraman told newspaper from Singapore via a videoconference.

The acquisition, he said includes a 26 per cent stake owned by NalSteel in Southern Steel Berhad, the 1.3-million-ton steel maker in Malaysia. He said under an agreement, the enterprise value is subject to certain adjustments for any net debt, minority interest and other liabilities and for working capital variance to relate to 225 million Singapore dollar. According to Muthuraman the transaction is expected to close in five-six months after obtaining necessary approvals.

**MNA/PTI**

**High rate of resistance to AIDS drugs due to non-adherence**

**New Delhi, 17 Aug** — AIDS/HIV patients in India in future may need high cost imported drugs effectively making treatment out of reach of the poor as they become resistant to available drugs because of non-adherence, a World Bank report has warned.

“In Mumbai 18 per cent of the people recently diagnosed with HIV were resistant to at least one anti-retroviral drug,” the report entitled ‘HIV/AIDS Treatment and Prevention in India—Modelling the Cost and Consequences’ said.

Although India has had access to AIDS therapy only since 2001, the resistance figure is already higher by 4 per cent than in North America in 2001.

As the percentage of recently diagnosed people with resistant strains grows over time, the inexpensive generic brands of anti-retroviral therapy drugs currently available in India would cease to be effective, it said.

Unless Indian pharmaceutical manufacturers are able to produce generic versions of all these newer drugs, patients with HIV/AIDS would have no choice but to buy imported drugs at prices that would be beyond the reach of all but the wealthiest minority, the report warned. The report said that in India the annual incidence of anti-retroviral therapy drug resistance is reported at 8 per cent in programmes that carefully monitor their patients. However, evidence shows that few Indian anti-retroviral therapy patients are being monitored closely.

**MNA/PTI**
**Family of Iraq abuse whistleblower threatened**

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug — Relatives of the US soldier who sounded the alarm about abuse of Iraqi detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison said on Monday the family was living in protective custody because of death threats against them.

Reservist military police officer Staff Sergeant Joseph Darby alerted US Army investigators about the abuse by fellow soldiers of prisoners at Abu Ghraib Prison near Baghdad, a move his wife says has angered people in their community in western Maryland.

"People were mean, saying he was a walking dead man, he was walking around with a bull's eye on his head. It was scary," said Bernadette Darby from Corningville, Maryland. Mrs Darby said it was difficult living in protective custody, and she missed her privacy. She did not say who was providing the protection. "There's always someone with you," she told ABC's "Good Morning America" show.

Despite the threats, Mrs Darby she believed her husband made the right choice exposing the abuse.

Joe is the type of person to take what is going on around him and be like, How would I feel if that was my wife... He just could not live with himself knowing that was happening and he did not do anything about it," she said.

Darby's sister-in-law, Maxine Carroll, said people had written graffiti on her fence but she also applauded what her brother-in-law did and said she was horrified by a series of graphic photographs Darby handed over to investigators.

"That's not what we are there for (in Iraq). We are there to show them the right way. When Joe can talk, then that is what he will say," she said.

In testimony this month at a hearing for one of the soldiers accused of abusing prisoners, Darby said he struggled with the decision to turn over the photos because he was friendly with one of the accused officers.

What he saw on the CDs containing the photos, he said, "violated everything I personally believed in and everything I had been taught about the rules of war." MNA/Reuters

**Syrian paper condemns US assaults on Iraq's Najaf**

DAMASCUS, 17 Aug — Syria's official Al-Thavra newspaper on Monday condemned the US assaults on Iraq's holy city of Najaf and called for an immediate US withdrawal from the country.

The US bombardment of Najaf was to compensate for the military, moral and political malfunction of its invasion of Iraq and to stop the resistance of the Iraqi people, the paper said in a commentary.

The US occupation of Iraq proved that it is not for the liberation and democratization of Iraq, but to "subjugate the Arab country and steal its resources and oil," said the paper.

It accused the United States of trying to turn Iraq into one of its bases in the Middle East, urging the United States to admit that the invasion was a big strategic mistake.

MNA/Xinhua

**Incas Airlines to expand operations in Bangladesh**

DHAKA, 18 Aug — Amid growing competition in air travel market, the Inca Airlines has come up with an expansion plan in Bangladesh offering special incentives for passengers.

The Indian state-run carrier planned to increase flight frequency to five flights a week from existing three on Kolkata-Dhaka route, The Daily Star reported Tuesday.

The Indian Airlines on Monday launched the Frequent Flyer programme, which offers a set of incentives to passengers including free ticket on mileage point, excess baggage-carrying, priority check-in and priority confirmation from the waiting list, the report said.

Indian Airlines connects 64 Indian cities and 16 international destinations.

The report said that increased air travel would strengthen trade relations between India and Bangladesh. Trade between the two countries has already witnessed an increasing trend. Export from Bangladesh to India is likely to cross 100 million US dollars mark this fiscal (2004-2005) year from 84 million dollars in the previous year. The Indian High Commission in Dhaka issues about 400,000 visas every year to Bangladeshi people who go to India for medical treatment, traveling, business and other purposes. — MNA/Xinhua

**Police release reporter in Najaf, threaten others**

BAGHDAD, 17 Aug — Iraqi police released an Arab journalist they arrested on Monday in the holy city of Najaf, where they also threatened to kill other foreign reporters if they left a hotel where journalists are staying, witnesses said.

Dubai-based Al Arabya television said police had released its correspondent Ahmed al-Saleh, who along with many other reporters has been covering fighting between US forces and Shiite militants loyal to radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

"We don't know yet why they arrested him, but they have released him," editor Abdul Sattar Ellazan told Reuters, adding that Saleh would continue to cover events in Najaf. Witnesses said police had come to the hotel and arrested Saleh.

"We will kill you if you leave the hotel. I will put four snipers on the roof to shoot anyone who leaves," a police lieutenant said.

Police then fired into the air and pointed their guns at the hotel, witnesses said.

One officer said they were also looking for the correspondents for Reuters and the Associated Press.

MNA/Reuters

**Suspected militants kidnap Iraqi officer**

DUBAI, 18 Aug — Suspected militants have kidnapped an Iraqi intelligence officer in response to the fighting in the holy city of Najaf, Al-Jazeera television reported on Tuesday.

The channel showed footage of a man standing between two masked men. It said they were militants who had identified themselves as "the Brigades of Defence Against Holy Sites". There was no audio, but Al-Jazeera said the militants had kidnapped the officer in response to the fighting in Najaf.

"A militant group calling itself the Brigades of Defence Against Holy Sites claimed it has kidnapped an Iraqi intelligence officer named Osama Abdul Jabbar. One of the masked men read out a statement and said the kidnapping was in response to the circle of fighting in Najaf," Al-Jazeera said.

"The captive revealed his name and post," it added.

Fierce fighting erupted in the centre of Najaf on Monday as US forces, backed by tanks, exchanged fire with Shiite militiamen entrenched around a holy site and an ancient cemetery, witnesses said.

Militiamen loyal to radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr have battled US and Iraqi Government forces for the past 12 days. A two-day lull was shattered on Sunday after talks to end the conflict peacefully collapsed.

The Shiite uprising has spread to seven cities. Sadr's militia have also battled US forces in a Baghdad suburb on Monday, destroying a tank. The crew escaped with minor wounds, a US military spokesman said.

Iraqis meeting to pick an interim national assembly in Baghdad said Monday they would send a delegation to Najaf to try to convince Sadr to end a conflict that has killed hundreds and undermined the authority of Prime Minister Iyad Allawi. — MNA/Reuters

**CNOOC, Husky sign deepwater oil exploration contract**


"This is the second deepwater exploration contract signed between CNOOC and Husky, and also the seventh total contract signed between them," said Zhang Guohua, the senior vice-president of CNOOC.

Block 29/26, one of the 12 deepwater blocks offered by CNOOC in 2002 for open tender, is located about 300 kilometres southeast off Hong Kong. Covering a sea area of 3,965 square kilometres, the block has a water depth averaging 300 to 2,000 metres. — MNA/Xinhua

**Masked Iraqi militiamen flash the victory sign near a burning British vehicle after it came under attack in the southern city of Basra on 17 August, 2004.**
Myanmar aviation industry spreads its wings

Mandalay International Airport in TadaU Township in Mandalay Division equipped with modern facilities. — MNA

Newly-inaugurated runway seen at Kyaukhtu Airport built in Saw Township, Magway Division. — MNA

The new Magway Airport building. — MNA

The new Magway Airfield and runway ready to receive jumbo jets. — MNA

Kawthoung Airport in Taninthayi Division. — MNA
Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt went on two-day goodwill visits to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Cambodia on 9 and 10 August. He led a delegation comprising Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win and officials.

In Hanoi, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt held separate meetings with his Vietnamese counterpart Mr Phan Van Khai, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam Mr Nong Duc Manh, and Chairman of the National Assembly of SRV Mr Nguyen Van An. During the meetings he exchanged views and discussed matters of mutual friendship and mutually beneficial issues with the hosts.

As it is the two-day three-country trip, he had to give more time to meetings, although he was able to briefly study the developments of the three cities — Hanoi, Vientiane and Phnom Penh. During the goodwill visits, he stayed for over six hours in Vietnam, about 16 hours including sleeping time in Laos, and five and a half hours in Cambodia totalling only about 28 hours in the three countries.

The hosts of the three countries also made every arrangement for the convenience of the Myanmar Prime Minister and delegation during their stay. They made efforts for the delegation’s convenience to that degree as Myanmar and Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia are fraternal countries.

The Ayeyawady-Mekong friendship visit was a short one, but so much fruitful and beneficial to the countries concerned. The visits help Strengthen the traditional friendship relations and cooperation between Myanmar and the three countries.

The Myanmar Prime Minister had cordial discussions with President of Laos Mr Khoutay Siphandone and Prime Minister Mr Bounnhang Vorachith, during which both sides exchanged views. In Cambodia, he held talks with Prime Minister Mr Samdech Hun Sen, and with Acting Head of State and Chairman of the Senate Mr Samdech Chea Sim. The talks were centred on ASEAN solidarity and firmness and international affairs in addition to mutually beneficial issues.

Myanmar and the three countries had similar experiences in history, striving to ward off foreign interferences and pressures, with similarities in culture, lifestyles and traditions. As Myanmar and the three countries are late-comers of the ASEAN, they have unity among themselves as the four CLMV countries. Moreover, they, located in the Greater Mekong Subregion, have the strong desire for national as well as regional development. Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar are active participants in the Ayeyawady-Chao-Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Forum. They are inviting Vietnam to join the organization.

Once, the four countries were facing backwardness, political instability and poverty due to their internal armed conflicts. Thus, they are the brethren nations having the same goal of striving tirelessly to become developed and prosperous nations as a means to free their people from the sufferings of the past.

So, all the discussions were held in a sincere and cordial atmosphere, although there was diplomatic talk which cannot be avoided. Myanmar and the three countries showed mutual understanding between each other. Now, I will present the brief accounts of the leaders of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia during their talks with the Myanmar Prime Minister as follows:

“We observe and value the principles of having mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty, non-interference, and the right to make decision for one’s own future. Only Myanmar has the right to decide her future.”

“We understand and support Myanmar’s endeavours for national consolidation and transition to democracy.”

“Materialization of democracy does not depend mainly on single party system or multi-party system, but on serving the people’s interest after accepting the majority’s wish and desire and facilitating contacts and coordination between the upper and lower levels.”

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“Materialization of democracy does not depend mainly on single party system or multi-party system, but on serving the people’s interest after accepting the majority’s wish and desire and facilitating contacts and coordination between the upper and lower levels.”

“We totally support Myanmar’s seven-point future policy programme, and believe that due to Myanmar’s situation in all aspects, transition to democracy will be successful only if it is being gradually carried out.”

“Our firm stand is that all ASEAN nations must participate in the Asia-Europe Meeting on equal status, without making any discrimination against the member nations.”
Strengthening friendship and unity among Ayeyawady-Mekong fraternal nations

(from page 8)
“Regional peace and stability and prosperity will be given due respect, while extending traditional friendly ties and mutual understanding and cooperation.”

“Cooperative efforts will be made for the ASEAN integration.”

More or less, there are differences in the choice of words among the leaders of the three countries, but their words vividly show the friendship and solidarity among the four Ayeyawady-Mekong nations.

Their words indicate the importance of mutual love, friendship, respect, support and cooperation, equality, and the participation in the regional and international peace and development.

During the goodwill visits, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt also explained Myanmar’s current developments, the future seven-point policy programme, friendship and cooperation with ASEAN nations, and the areas of bilateral cooperation as follows:

“Myanmar thanks ASEAN nations for their support and understanding for her role in the regional and international arena.”

“We assure to strive for further progress and strengthening of peace and stability in the region through bilateral cooperation or within the principles of ASEAN framework.”

Myanmar and Vietnam or the CLMV countries will have to strive to catch up with other member nations. In addition, it is important for them to closely work together and coordinate among themselves to face and overcome challenges.”

His words covering bilateral relations and multilateral relations are meaningful and beneficial to all the four countries.

While in Vietnam, Minister Col Tin Hlaing and Minister of Public Security of the host country Mr Le Hong Anh signed the Cooperation Agreement between the Government of the Union of Myanmar and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on Prevention and Fighting Against Crime. It is one of the developments in the bilateral relations between the two countries.

India, China discuss cooperation between police forces

BEIJING, 18 Aug—India and China have for the first time explored the possibilities of bilateral cooperation between their police forces to safeguard internal security, including counter-terrorist activities, a senior official said here on Tuesday.

Both the countries have viewed terrorism as a global phenomenon and decided to fight the menace together and explore possibilities for future cooperation at a meeting between officials from the Indian Home Ministry and Chinese People’s Armed Police (PAP) here.

There was unanimity of opinion on both sides that terrorism has become a global phenomenon and the need for both India and China to cooperate to face the menace, Indian Joint Secretary (Police), Ministry of Home Affairs, A K Jain said. Jain, who is currently leading the first-ever Indian police delegation to China, said he had “excellent” meetings with senior officials of China’s police agencies and the two sides have decided to explore opportunities to cooperate and chart out a structured programme for future cooperation.

Jain called on the Commander of the Chinese People’s Armed Police General Wu Shuang Zhan and also held in-depth discussions with the PAP deputy commander, Lieutenant General Liang Hong here on Monday.

He also visited a local PAP unit and was shown an exhibition of Chinese-made security gadgets.

China donates relief food to Kenya’s drought victims

NAIROBI, 18 Aug—China’s Red Cross Society donated some 60,000 kilos of maize flour to drought-hit Kenya on Monday, to help Kenyans who were affected by the crippling disaster.

The donation worth 20,000 US dollars are all purchased locally, Chinese Ambassador Guo Chongli, who made the donation on behalf of the Red Cross, said at the hand-over ceremony.

“It is our sincere hope that these suppliers can help brotherly Kenyan people when they are in difficulties,” the ambassador said, adding that “we firmly believe that.

Chinese V-P places importance on links with Nepal

BEIJING, 18 Aug—Chinese Vice-President Zeng Qinghong said here Tuesday China regards its relations with Nepal as an important link in its relationships with neighbouring countries.

Zeng made the remark during his meeting with visiting Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Nepal Paras Bir Bikram Shah Dev in the Great Hall of the People Tuesday afternoon.

Zeng said no matter what changes occur internationally, China will remain steady and fast in its policy toward Nepal.

Zeng said China cherishes its traditional friendship with Nepal as it pursues foreign policy of treating neighbours as friends and partners.

Paras said the royal family and government of Nepal appreciate the long-term assistance and support of China. He said Nepal will always support China, adding that the country is willing to expand mutually beneficial exchange and cooperation in all fields with China.
**Saudi Arabia wants oil down to $25-$30**

**KUWAIT, 17 Aug** — Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah, prefers to see world oil prices between 25 US dollar-30 US dollar a barrel and said Riyadh will pump "as much as fields allow" to cool off overheated markets.

In an interview published in Kuwaiti newspaper al-Seyassah and its sister publication Arab Times on Monday, Abdullah said the world's top crude exporter already is pumping oil at "record levels" to keep prices from harming world economic growth.

"We never wanted the price to cross the 30 US dollar barrier...we see that prices should fluctuate between 25 US dollar to 30 US dollar a barrel that some countries are not hurt," said Abdullah.

"We are not here talking about big countries, but poor countries who will suffer and whose development will halt with a rise in oil prices," the Crown Prince did not specify which crude price he was referring to, but officials from countries in the Organization of the Petroleum-Exporting Countries generally refer to the cartel's reference index, which last stood at 41.33 US dollar.

That implies the kingdom wants to see oil prices drop by more than 10 US dollar-15 a barrel from current levels. Benchmark US oil futures, worth a premium over heavier OPEC crude, on Monday traded as high as 46.91 US dollar a barrel, a record.

Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi said last week the kingdom's production had risen to an average 9.5 million barrels per day (bpd) during the past three months and that crude requirements for September were at least that high.

Abdullah said the kingdom would pump "as much as our fields will allow in order to curb Prices", and Western oil industry sources said they see Saudi output near 10 million bpd next month.

"We are doing our best to slow down this trend by increasing our production which is at record high levels," said the Crown Prince. "We can only increase our production, the rest is not in our hands." Naimi said last week Riyadh had 1.3 million bpd of production to spare and the Crown Prince also made clear that Riyadh stood ready to boost production higher.

**EU plans ban on aggressive fishing to protect coral**

**BRUSSELS, 18 Aug** — The European Union could soon ban aggressive fishing practices around some of Europe's cold-water coral reefs to protect vulnerable marine life, the European Commission said on Monday.

"The European Commission has proposed measures to ensure protection for deep-sea corals around the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands until long-term rules can be established later on this year," the EU executive said in a statement.

A Commission official said the pre-emptive ban would outlaw a practice known as "bottom trawling", which involves ships dragging huge weighted nets in very deep water near underwater mountains known as seamounts.

The nets scoop up all marine life in their path, from valuable fish to inedible species and delicate corals.

At present, only domestic fleets from Portugal are allowed to fish off Madeira and the Azores, with similar provisions in force for Spanish fleets fishing off the Canary Islands.

Those fleets do not practise bottom trawling, but the restrictions are set to expire at the end of this year.

**Arab needs $63.5b for five-year oil, gas investment**

**KUWAIT CITY, 18 Aug** — Arab countries need about 63.5 billion US dollars to finance oil and gas projects between 2002 and 2006, the Kuwait News Agency reported here Monday.

Most of the investments will come from international banks due to the limited financial capabilities of Arab banks, a study in the quarterly magazine of the Organization of the Arab Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OAPC) was quoted as saying.

The study estimated that investments in gas, refining and petrochemical projects in Arab states during 2002-2006 will amount to 63.5 billion US dollars, with 36.5 billion US dollars for natural gas projects, about 20 billion for the petrochemical projects and the rest for refining projects.

Most of the investments will go to Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman, added the study. The study further noted that to maintain and increase the capacity of oil production, Arab countries need another 49 billion US dollars during the same period.

**Britain carries out clean-up operation after flood devastation**

**LONDON, 18 Aug** — A massive clean-up operation was under way in north Cornwall, southwest England, after devastating flash floods hit the area on Monday afternoon, the BBC reported Tuesday.

Half of the village of Boscastle remained under a police cordon on Tuesday morning, after heavy storms caused 6 centimetres of rain to fall in two hours in the area, one of Cornwall's most picturesque and historic tourist spots.

Local police have appealed for sightings to stay away and thousands of homes in North Cornwall were also put on alert after several buildings in Boscastle were destroyed and more than 50 cars swept away by a wall of water three metres high.

Over 100 people were airlifted to safety during a rescue operation involving the British Royal Air Force and emergency services which ended on early Tuesday. Eight people received minor injuries and no-one was reported missing. The search and rescue operation continued as six teams checked that no one has been trapped under rubble or in any of the cars.

The BBC quoted Coast-guard Agency officer Fred Cazayll as reporting that there was one police dive team involved and a specialist body recovery team "in case of any eventualities".

A building surveyor would assess the safety of any buildings affected and a vet was on hand to deal with any animals which may be found, the BBC said.
Information Minister inspects two new rotary presses imported from India

Yangon, 18 Aug — Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, together with Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein went to Bo Aung Kyaw Container Yard at noon today and inspected two new four-unit rotary presses imported from India to be installed at Government Press (Mandalay) of Printing and Publishing Enterprise in Upper Myanmar.

First, the minister inspected loading of the containers onto the vehicles. Acting Managing Director of PPE U Kyaw Thu and officials reported on matters related to arrangements for sending the presses to Mandalay. The minister gave instructions on prevention against damages of machine parts in the containers, safety of the machines along the route and systematic installation of the machines at the Government Press (Mandalay). Later, the minister inspected putting the machines into the containers. — MNA

HK population increases by 0.6%

Hong Kong, 18 Aug — Hong Kong’s population stood at 6.84 million (provisional) at mid-2004, representing an increase of 38,800 or 0.6 per cent over that of mid-2003, the Census and Statistics Department announced here Tuesday.

The overall population increase of 38,800 comprises a natural increase of 8,100 and a net inflow of 30,700 residents.

The department said both births and inflow of one-way Permit holders (OWPHs) were important constituents of the overall population increase.

The ratio of the number of births, at 45,500 during mid-2001 to mid-2004, to the overall population increase over the same period was 115 per cent.

The ratio of the inflow of OWPHs, at 41,500, to the overall population increase was 107 per cent.

Deaths in the meantime offset part of the increase.

The overall population increase of 38,800 is made up of births of 45,500, deaths of 30,700, and inflows from OWPHs of 41,500.

China’s largest private art gallery under construction

Nanning, 18 Aug — A private investor and avid artwork collector based in the eastern China province of Jiangsu has spent 18 million US dollars to build the country’s largest private art gallery.

The Yilanzhai Art Gallery, wholly owned by Yilanzhai Artwork Co., covers 96,700 square metres in the provincial capital Nanjing, a “laudable move” to be taken by a private company, as Xu Huping, curator of the Nanjing Museum, puts it. Xu said it was the first time for a private investor to build an art gallery of its size.

The new gallery under construction will be twice as big as the provincial art gallery. It’ll promote cultural development in the province,” he added.

Yilanzhai Artwork Co., whose name means “house of artwork and orchids” in Chinese, is a professional collector of ancient paintings and calligraphic works. Xu has collected nearly 3,000 authentic works from the Ming (1368 - 1644) and Qing (1644 - 1911) dynasties over the past two decades, more than 20 of which have been listed by the Chinese Government as national gems.

The company will put its collections on display in the new gallery, which will have exhibition halls, collection centres, conference rooms and workshops dedicated to keeping ancient artwork intact upon its completion next year, say sources with Yilanzhai Artwork Co.

Mayor inspects road repairs

Yangon, 18 Aug — Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor of Yangon City Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin this morning inspected repair work of roads in Bahan, Kamayut and Hline townships.

He also went to stone crusher in Dawbon Township and inspected stockpiles of cement and tar, production of paving slabs, concrete slabs and inter lock and stone crushing. — MNA

HK population increases by 0.6%

MNA/Xinhua

One more Vietnamese suspected to contract bird flu

Hanoi, 18 Aug — A child from Vietnam’s southern Hau Giang Province, the home to most suspected cases of bird flu in the country, received treatment after showing symptoms of fever and breathing difficulties.

The two-year-old boy, who is in stable condition in the Pediatrics Hospital in the southern city of Can Tho, was hospitalized on August 14 after several poultry raised by his family died suddenly, an official from the Hau Giang Preventive Medicine Bureau said on Tuesday.

“The Pasteur Institute in Ho Chi Minh is testing the samples taken from the patient for bird flu virus,” he noted.

Since July 19, nine people from the northern province of Ha Tay and the two southern provinces of Tra Vinh and Hau Giang were hospitalized with bird flu symptoms, of whom six died. However, recent testing conducted at the institute showed that two patients from Hau Giang and Tra Vinh were tested negative for bird flu viruses.

The deaths, two children from Ha Tay and a young woman from Hau Giang, were caused by infection with the H5N1 strain of bird flu, a local doctor at the Vietnam’s Hygiene and Epidemiology Institute said, explaining that further testing showed that they contracted the HSN1, not just H5 in initial testing.

After informing the WHO about bird flu situations in Vietnam, the country’s Department of Animal Health, on Monday, had an expert-level working session with the WHO on cooperation in research and coordination to prevent a bird flu outbreak among humans. A small group of WHO experts are expected to arrive in Vietnam to offer technical assistance in the next few days. Eleven southern localities, including the city of Can Tho and the provinces of Ha Giang, Long An, Bac Lieu, Tra Vinh, Dong Thap, Vinh Long, Tien Giang, Ba Ria Vung Tau, Kien Giang and Ben Tre, have been hit by bird flu, which has either killed or led to the forced culling of some 63,000 fowls, mainly chickens and quails since late June.

In late March 2004, Vietnam declared an end to bird flu that killed 17 per cent of its poultry population, and claimed 16 human lives since its previous outbreak last December. A total of 43.2 million fowls nationwide either died or were culled, causing direct losses of 1.3 trillion Vietnamese dong (82.8 million US dollars) to the local poultry industry. — MNA/Xinhua

MuO signed for producing bio-diesel from jetropha

Chennai (Tamil Nadu), 18 Aug — A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on Tuesday between England’s D1 Oils Limited and Chennai-based Mohan Breweries and Distilleries Limited for producing bio-diesel from jetropha and to set up a refinery for it.

The MoU was signed in the presence Chief Minister Jayalalithaa of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu at the state secretariat here, an Official Press release said.

“This is for the first time that such a MoU has been signed for producing bio-diesel through jetropha. Also, this is the first time that an English-based unit has signed such an agreement with an agency outside its country,” the release said.

Under the agreement reached Tuesday, quality seeds would be supplied to farmers to enable them to increase their productivity.

“This will also help increase rural employment and put fallow lands into productive use,” the release said.

MNA/PTI

Minister inspects Fresh Water Fish Garden construction

Yangon, 18 Aug — Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Muang Maung Thein today attended the meeting on construction of Fresh Water Fish Garden held at the briefing hall of Kandawgyi aquarium construction site here.

At the meeting, member of the supervisory committee for construction of Fresh Water Fish Garden Deputy Director of the Fisheries Department U Min Tha reported on progress of work and tasks being undertaken.

Later, the minister inspected the construction work including ponds, pavements in the garden and construction of a tunnel.

To upgrade the Kandawgyi Garden and Zoological Gardens (Yangon), Fresh Water Fish Garden will be constructed in the Education Zone of the garden by the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries. — MNA

SOCCER TEAM LEAVES FOR VIETNAM: The Myanmar soccer team seen at Yangon International Airport before departure for LG Soccer Tournament to be held in Vietnam on 18 August. — NLM
bacteria, yeasts, fungi, moulds, yeasts, bacteria, cyanobacteria, and viruses. The process of disinfection involves the use of various chemicals and physical methods to kill or remove these microorganisms from surfaces or materials. Disinfection is crucial in the pharmaceutical industry, where it is used to prepare medical devices and equipment for use in medical procedures.

In summary, the disinfection process is a critical aspect of maintaining hygiene and safety in various industries, and it plays a vital role in preventing the spread of diseases and ensuring the effectiveness of medical procedures.
Havana, 17 Aug — City workers distributed water in tanker trucks and urged some 1.4 million residents of the Cuban capital with no running water on Monday to remain calm four days after Hurricane Charley roared through the area.

A government official in a car with loudspeakers on the roof urged residents to conserve water and said it could take several days to restore services to 70 percent of the city with no water.

The Aguas de La Habana water company said the hurricane hit Cuba with 105-mile per hour winds, killing four people and damaging 40,000 homes when it barrelled through Havana Province and the western side of Havana on Friday.

Zambia: maize much sought after in southern Africa

Lusaka, 18 August — Zambian produce is now a much sought after commodity in the hungry region of southern Africa, with the number of countries seeking to import maize from Zambia swollen to seven.

Zambian Agriculture and Cooperatives Minister Mundia Sikatana said in an interview that Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Namibia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Malawi, Kenya and Mozambique have indicated their wish to import maize from Zambia.

Sikatana indicated that initially only Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Namibia had indicated their wish to import maize from Zambia. According to official

Water scarce in Havana from "Charley's" passage

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Luo wins China's first pool gold

ATHENS, 17 Aug—World champion Luo Xuejuan brought China their first swimming title of the Athens Olympics with a brave victory in the 100-metre breaststroke on Monday. Australian Brooke Hanson and Leisel Jones gave chase but Luo, who appeared to be tying up in the race to the wall, managed to keep them at bay and won in one minute 06.64 seconds, breaking the Olympic record set by Jones in Sunday's preliminaries.

Hanson took the silver in 1:07.15 and world record holder Jones, silver medallist at the 2004 Sydney Olympics, had to settle for the bronze, just 0.01 seconds behind. —MNA/Reuters

China wins third diving gold

ATHENS, 17 Aug—China collected their third straight diving gold of the Athens Olympics on Monday when Lao Lishi and Li Ting won the women's synchronized 10 metre platform final at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games on 16 August, 2004.—INTERNET

Ballack replaces Kahn as Germany captain

BERLIN, 17 Aug—Germany's new coach Juergen Klinsmann named midfield playmaker Michael Ballack as his captain on Monday in place of goalkeeper Oliver Kahn.

Klinsmann made the announcement two days before his first match in charge of the national side, a friendly against Austria.

“I wanted as the captain an outfield player who was in contact with all members of the team. Ballack is exactly the linkman I had imagined,” Klinsmann told reporters.

“I spoke with both players about this and both accepted the decision. Oliver Kahn will reprise for Ballack in future,” Klinsmann added.

The Germans opted to replace the fiery Kahn, who often berated his colleagues since taking over from Oliver Bierhoff in 2001, with the more softly-spoken Ballack, eight years his junior at 27.

Ballack's midfield dominance and goals helped Germany reach the 2002 World Cup final, and the national side has been built around him ever since, although his form dipped by his own high standards.

Ballack said he was looking forward to the challenge.

“I am often criticized for not being loud enough on the pitch. But I am a central midfielder and so I am able to influence the team. I will now take on more responsibility,” he said. Kahn said he accepted the decision, although he expressed less delight at Klinsmann's proposal to rotate the three goalkeeper, believing he was the clear man.

Germany were forced to replace defenders Jens Nowotny and Arne Friedrich who were both injured in weekend Bundesliga action.

Chelesa's Robert Huth, who turns 20 on Wednesday, wins his first call up to the national squad. Bayern Munich's Thomas Linke has also been drafted in at the last minute after the case of a two-year absence.

Werder Bremen striker Miroslav Klose also had to withdraw after injuring his thigh in training. The friendly international on Wednesday marks the centenary celebrations of the Austrian Football Association.

Sampanis gives Greece a medal

ATHENS, 17 Aug—Shi Zhiyong completed a golden day for China's weightlifters, winning the 62 kilos men's Olympic title on Monday, but the biggest cheers belonged to Leonidas Sampanis who appeared to be tying up in the race to the 2004 Olympic title.

Shi laid the groundwork for his victory in the snatch with a huge lift of 152.5 kilos and then combined it with 172.5 kilos in the clean and jerk to take the gold with a world record equalling total of 325 kilos, ahead of compatriot Li Xiaofeng, 312.5 kilos.

But the large crowd inside the Nikaia weightlifting hall had come to see just one man and the 33-year-old Sampanis did not disappoint. A tense evening of competition to see which athlete could lift the most was in the end decided by who weighed the least. Sampanis also lifted 312.5 kilos but Maosheng finished ahead because he was 22 grammes lighter.

Bronze or silver, it did not matter for the flag-waving, chanting crowd. Sampanis's medal-winning effort relieved days of pent-up anxiety for the hosts, who had fretted over a drug-test scandal involving the country's two top athletes Costas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou and talk of poor ticket sales. —MNA/Reuters

Greece wins its first gold in diving

ATHENS, 17 Aug—Host nation Greece won its first gold medal of the Athens Olympics on Monday when Nikolaos Siranidis and Thomas Bimis triumphed in the men's synchronized three-metre diving.

The crowd at the indoor pool resembled a rugby match with the men's five-man team against Italian Salvatore Sanzo. Siranidis and Bimis triumphed in the men's synchronized three-metre diving.

The American team also dived for their victory and their final effort was declared a no-dive and they received no points, letting in Siranidis and Bimis for victory.

The American team also dived badly in their final-round bid for gold, scoring poorly. —MNA/Reuters

Guyart wins physical battle to take men's foil

ATHENS, 17 Aug—France's Brice Guyart was not afraid to resort to the rough stuff on his way to the men's individual foil Olympic gold on Monday (15-13) in a final which often resembled a rugby match against Italian Salvatore Sanzo.

The Frenchman was warned first for shoulder-barging and then for ‘rocking’ his opponent who fell to the floor. Sanzo was also warned for foul play.

French President Jacques Chirac sent Guyart a message of congratulations. —MNA/Reuters

Rangers midfielder Rae handed five-match ban by UEFA

GENEVA, 17 Aug—Rangers midfielder Alex Rae has received a five-match European ban for gross unsporting conduct after kicking out at CSKA Moscow's Serguei Dada during a Champions League qualifying defeat. UEFA said on Monday.

Rae, making his European debut in Rangers' 2-1 defeat in Russia on August 10, was found guilty of kicking Dada in the head in the 79th minute of the third qualifying round, first-leg match.

Dada fell to the ground following a challenge with Rae and was seen to handle the ball.

Rae then appeared to kick the ball with his left foot before kicking Dada in the head with his right.

Dutch referee Jan Wegereef only saw the handball and restarted the match with a free kick to Rangers, leaving CSKA players and officials outraged.

Video evidence was used by UEFA and European soccer's governing body said "it took into account that the action could have resulted in a serious injury to the Russian player," in handing out the hefty suspension.

Rae has until midnight on Thursday to appeal against the decision.

The second leg takes place in Glasgow on August 25. —MNA/Reuters

11th ASEAN Schools Gymnastics C'ship opens in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 17 Aug—The 11th ASEAN Schools Gymnastics Championships opened here on Monday with the participation of 73 players and 39 officials from five countries. The five participating countries are Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Singapore's Minister of State for Education Chan Soo Sen said that in recent years, the standards of gymnastics in the countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have shown considerable improvement, largely attributed to the efforts made by the ASEAN Schools Sports Council.

Greece's Nikolaoi Siranidis, front, and Thomas Bimis dive to the gold medal in the Men's 3 metre synchronized springboard diving event at the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, On Monday, 16 Aug, 2004.—INTERNET

Greece's Lao Lishi and Li Ting dive in the women's synchronised 10 metre platform final at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games on 16 August, 2004.—INTERNET

China's Lao Lishi and Li Ting won silver in the women's synchronized 10 metre platform final at the Athens 2004 Olympic Games on 16 August, 2004.—INTERNET

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Greece wins its first gold in diving

ATHENS, 17 Aug—Host nation Greece won its first gold medal of the Athens Olympics on Monday when Nikolaos Siranidis and Thomas Bimis triumphed in the men's synchronized three-metre diving.

The crowd at the indoor pool in the Athens Olympic complex erupted in cheers as their victory was announced and the divers danced around the pool to traditional Greek music played over the public address system.

The Chinese pair were head-to-head with Siranidis and Bimis for victory.

Sampanis, who was in the lead, decided by who weighed the least. Sampanis also lifted 312.5 kilos but Maosheng finished ahead because he was 22 grammes lighter.

Bronze or silver, it did not matter for the flag-waving, chanting crowd.

Sampanis's medal-winning effort relieved days of pent-up anxiety for the hosts, who had fretted over a drug-test scandal involving the country's two top athletes Costas Kenteris and Katerina Thanou and talk of poor ticket sales. —MNA/Reuters
**WEATHER**

**Wednesday, 18 August 2004**

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain has been isolated in Kayah State, scattered in Mandalay and Magway Divisions, and widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfalls in Bago Division. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Bago (6.10) inches, central Yangon (2.60) inches, Yangon (Mingaladon) (2.48) inches, Yangon (Kaba-Aye) (2.44) inches and Kyankphyu (2.44) inches each.

Maximum temperature on 17-8-2004 was 31.0°C (88°F). Minimum temperature on 18-8-2004 was 20.0°C (68°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 18-8-2004 was 92%. Total sunshine hours on 17-8-2004 was (4.4) hours approx. Rainfall on 18-8-2004 was 63 mm (2.48 inches) at Yangon Airport, 62 mm (2.44 inches) at Kaba-Aye, 66 mm (2.60 inches) at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 2271 mm (89.4 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2222 mm (87.48 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2219 mm (87.36 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 12 mph from Southwest at 15:45 hours MST on 17-8-2004.

Bay inference: Monsoon is generally moderate in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 19-8-2004: Rain will be scattered in Kayah State, Mandalay, Magway and lower Sagaing Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Bago, Ayeeyawady and Yangon Divisions. Degree of certainty is (100%).

State of the sea: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coast. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30) to (35) mph.

Outlook for subsequent two days: General decrease of rain in eastern Myanmar areas.

**Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 19-8-2004:** Some rain. Degree of certainty is (100%).

**Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 19-8-2004:** Isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (80%).

**Flood Warning**

(Issued at 13:00 hrs MST on 18-8-2004)

The water level of Bago River at Bago may rise 30 cm (about 1-4) and reach the danger level (910 cm) during the next (24) hours commencing noon today.
**Yangon, 18 Aug —** After finding some Pyu cultural earthen objects and a foundation of a building in Tagaung region in 1997, the Archaeology Department (Upper Myanmar) has been paying special attention to searching more ancient objects and buildings of Pyu culture in the region, continuously discovering urns, beads, bricks, bronze, blackened bronze, moeyothwa (a kind of mineral), bronze, ironware and coins of Pyu era.

The department of the Ministry of Culture found the objects and the foundation of the building in a cultivation field of U Tin Win near Hsinnyu village, Tagaung region, Thabeikyin Township, Mandalay Division. At present, the department is excavating and discovering collections of urns and goglets, that are rare to be found even in other Pyu regions — Hanlin, Beikthano and Srikestra.

Finding of Pyu era artifacts at two places, that have been named plot No 1 and plot No 2, in the compound of Tagaung Basic Education High School, has definitely proved Tagaung region as the place where ancient Pyu race had once lived.

When a hole was dug in the earth for a school toilet at the southeast corner of the compound, a vase-like pot together with its lid was accidentally found at the depth of four feet on 3 July 2004. The pot was fixed as No 11 pot. Of the three rows of the palace walls of Tagaung, the pot was found at a place that was inside the second wall or Bagan Wall. The pot also contained 15 small bells, 12 earthen beads, one iron bracelet, broken pieces of iron bracelets, one bronze ring, two silver bracelet-like artifacts, two orange colour pendant beads, and a necklace of beads whose shape resembles that of a mini long drum, a cylinder-shaped bead, one small white bead, a small black bead and one coin.

Headmaster of the school U Win Myint handed over the objects to Sayadow U Panditananda, who is serving as the curator of a temporary museum, displaying objects of Tagaung era.

A team comprising Director U Wai Lwin of Archaeology Department (Upper Myanmar), expert Tampawady U Win Maung, writer Chit San Win, ancient artifacts keeper U Aye Lwin continued to excavate the place and found four more pots, which they named Pot No 12, Pot No 13, Pot No 14, and Pot No 15. Twenty-three objects — five urns, 16 goglets, one plate and a cup were found at the place on 11 August.

After analyzing the finds at the place, the team made an excavation at a new place lying six feet north of it. At the depth of two feet, the team found a collection of three urns and nine goglets.

When the Pot No 14 and Pot No 15 were opened in the presence of local authorities and experts, two curved knives, one short knife, a sword, one iron rivet, one 11.5-inch bronze spoon, one earthen lid, two bronze lids, 31 beads, one-inch square gold plate, human skulls, and cremated bones of human vertebra, hand, leg, fingers, toes and buttock. The pot No 14 is 15 inches long, with a 12-inch diameter base. The diameter at the open is 6.5 inches. A lid and a rattan circular frame were also found together with it. The circular frame is one inch thick and the diameter of the lid is three inches thick and nine inches wide.

Inside the urn-15 are a sword, ironware, a bead, six molars and three teeth, a small necklace, a short drum-shape bead, a hexagonal glass bead, 15 plastic beads and an arrow. The urn-15 with circular shape frame and a lid is ten inches in height and its diameter is 8 inches. The circular shape frame is one inch high, the lid is four inches and its diameter is seven inches. The urns and goglets excavated were decorated with the pictures of rooster and bowls on the neck and upper part of the goglets.

On the body of the urn are the designs of straight line, diamond and waves. The neck of the urn is small and there is nothing in it. The urns of Pyu period and artifacts are ancient objects with high historical value and are very important for historians who are conducting research of the history of ancient Tagaung.

The Ministry of Culture is making arrangements for construction of a museum where all these objects were found. Excavation continues at nearby places. MNA

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**Gems & Jade Sale continues**

**Yangon, 18 Aug —** Gem Merchants at home and abroad totalling 889 today observed the gem and jade lots displayed at the 17th gem and jade sale for the year 2004 of the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd at the Myanmar Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here. Gem and jade bargain forms will be opened at 7.30 am tomorrow. The sale will be launched at 9 am tomorrow and jade and gem lots will be sold through tender system and competitive bidding.

Managing Director of UMEH Ltd Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd) this morning inspected the gem and jade lots and cordially greeted the merchants. MNA

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**Stimulant tablets seized in Tachileik**

**Yangon, 18 Aug —** A combined team comprising members of the local intelligence unit, Tachileik Special Anti-Drug Squad and local battalion, acting on information, searched the house of Ar Be in Adee Village, Lwedawkham Village-tract, Tachilek Township, on 29 December 2003. The authorities seized 40,000 stimulant tablets, a USA-made shotgun, 12 rounds of ammunition, one Czech-made 22 gun, one USA-made 9mm pistol, 50 rounds of its ammunition and one-hand made shotgun kept under his bed. Tachileik Police Station filed him with FIR 89/2003 and 90/2003 under the Sections 15/ 19A/22 (B) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law. Tachileik District Court sentenced Ar Be, son of U Lau Tha Sein, to 16 years’ imprisonment under Sections 19(A) and 22 (B) and Ar Gel (a) Zaw Tun, son of U Ar Thae to 16 years’ under Section 19(A) and 30 years’ under Section 21 of the law. MNA

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**Deputy Minister arrives back from India**

**Yangon, 18 Aug —** Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation U Pe Thaing arrived at Yangon International Airport on the afternoon after visiting India. They were welcomed back by Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min, Deputy Minister Thura U Thaung Lwin and officials.

Director-General of MR U Min Swe and Assistant General Manager (Civil) U Than Huy of MR also arrived back here on the same flight. MNA

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**Study group concludes visit**

**Yangon, 18 Aug —** The study group led by Lt-Gen Tarz Wazim Ghazi of National Defence College of Pakistan left home this afternoon after visiting Myanmar.

They were seen off at the airport by Deputy Commandant of National Defence College Brig-Gen Than Maung, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, Ambassador of Pakistan to Myanmar Mr Muhammad Nawaz Chaudhury and officials. MNA