Visa cardholders spend $17.3b in Asia Pacific regions in 2003

HONG KONG, 9 Oct — Visa cardholders visiting Asia Pacific Regions are spending more than ever, purchasing goods and services worth 17.3 billion US dollars in 2003, up from 16 billion US dollars in 2002, said Visa in a report released on Thursday.

The report, entitled “Recent trends in spending by visitors to Asia Pacific”, shows that the two largest spending countries of origin in the region in 2003 were the United States (3.26 billion US dollars) and the United Kingdom (2.62 billion US dollars).

And they were followed by Japan (1.81 billion US dollars), Hong Kong (1.07 billion US dollars) and Australia (970 million US dollars). In total, these top five locations accounted for 36 per cent of the total Visa Asia Pacific spent by international cardholders.

The highest spending on a per transaction basis was by cardholders from Chinese Mainland, with an average spending per transaction of 253 US dollars. By comparison, the United States and the United Kingdom averaged 135 US dollars and 141 US dollars per transaction, respectively.

The report highlights the trend of cardholders shopping for a diverse range of goods and services in different countries and regions. For example, spending by Visa cardholders at arts and craft stores in Mainland has been growing steadily over the last five years; in Hong Kong, international Visa cardholders spend more on clothing, while in Australia cardholders spend more on education services relative to other destinations in Asia Pacific. Electronic and computer-related goods are relatively popular in Japan and Singapore.

On a per transactions basis, in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia, education attracted the highest spending. In contrast, in Hong Kong it was household goods that topped the category; in Japan it was accommodation; and in Mainland, mail order transactions attracted the highest spending per transaction in 2003.

The report also shows that on-line transactions account for a minority of tourism-related spending. On average, 91 per cent of the 17.3 billion US dollars international Visa spent in Asia Pacific occurred in person between cardholders and merchants, as opposed to over the telephone, Internet or through mail-order transactions.

The growing importance of intra-regional tourism to Asia Pacific countries was also highlighted, with Asia Pacific based cardholders making up 45 per cent of the total Visa spending in 2003, up from 39 per cent in 1999. — MNA/Xinhua

Sweden tops global e-banking stakes

STOCKHOLM, 9 Oct — Swedes are the world’s most prolific users of online banking services, according to a new research published on Thursday.

Figures from Nielsen NetRatings, the global Internet audience measurement and analysis company, showed that 2.7 million Swedes — 30 per cent of the population — visited a bank web site in August 2004.

Sweden’s closest e-banking rival is the Netherlands, where 22 per cent of inhabitants used Internet banking services during the same period. In the United States, the figure was 14 per cent.

Largest among Sweden’s Internet banks is Forenings Sparbanken, which had 1,455,000 individual visitors in August — a 15-per-cent increase compared to the previous year.

Svenska Handelsbanken, another of Sweden’s four large commercial banks, saw its share of the market grow as its Internet user visits increased 21 per cent. — MNA/Xinhua

Brazil, Spain sign trade agreement

BRASIL, 9 Oct — Brazil and Spain signed a general cooperation agreement here on Thursday to widen bilateral trade, the Brazil-Spain Chamber of Commerce announced.

The Brazil-Spain Chamber of Commerce president Carlos Moreno- Garcia and the Export and Promotion Agency of Brazil (APEX) president Juan Quiros signed the agreement, which identifies companies with the capacity of extending their business to both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Under the agreement, the APEX will encourage more Brazilian companies to enter the Spanish market. On the other hand, Brazil with nearly 200 million population represents a potential market for Spain. It is one of the principal destinations for the Spanish investment abroad, said the Brazil-Spain Chamber of Commerce.

According to the sign Trade Ministry, Spain exported 798 million euros (957 million US dollars) of goods to Brazil in 2003 and imported 1.27 billion euros (1.52 billion dollars), 38.54 per cent more than that of the previous year. — MNA/Xinhua

OAS chief to resign

WASHINGTON, 9 Oct — Secretary-general of the Organization of American States (OAS) Miguel Angel Rodriguez announced on Friday that he will resign next week.

“I resign the post of secretary-general of the OAS on 15 October,” Rodriguez said in a letter to the Washington-based OAS.

Rodriguez was sworn in on 23 September to a five-year term as chief of the world’s oldest regional organization.

Rodriguez announced his resignation amid accusations of corruption dating to his presidency of Costa Rica.


Georgia to normalize relations with Russia

MOSCOW, 9 Oct — Georgian Prime Minister Zurab Zhvania Thursday said the priority of Georgia’s foreign policy is to normalize relations with Russia, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

“All Georgian citizens, from villagers to top politicians are interested in establishing good neighbourly and friendly relations with Russia,” Zhvania said.

The Prime Minister expressed the willingness of Georgia “to resolve the problems blocking the establishment of such relations”, saying the Georgian authorities “are ready for reasonable compromises, and are hoping for same steps by the Russian side, while taking into account the interests of both countries”.

Zhvania said Tbilisi calls for developing cooperation with Russia in the spheres of border protection and fight against terrorism, adding that “Georgia is going to set up a Georgian-Russian anti-terrorist centre on its territory.”

Georgia and Russia have different approaches regarding the settlement of the smoldering conflicts — in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, according to the official. But “it is impossible to establish peace and stability in the Caucasus without normalizing the Georgian-Russian relations and settling these conflicts”, he added. — MNA/Xinhua

China hosts first International Conference on Media Education

BEIJING, 9 Oct — The First International Conference on Media Education in China opened here Friday in Communication University of China (CUC), a leading university special for training media talents in China.

Focusing on “Media Education in Information Age”, experts from domestic and overseas will discuss a series of topics, including building media education theory with Chinese characteristics.

The four-day seminar will also focus on how China can teach its young people to critically evaluate the media. Media literacy is the ability to access and evaluate information from the media.

Many countries, like Canada and the United States, have listed the media education a regular curriculum in schools.

Originated from 1930s in England, media education was aimed to encourage students to “see clearly and resist” the influence of mass media.

As the presence of television, movies and advertising expands in China — so does education about its affects. — MNA/Xinhua
Barcelona interested in signing 12-year-old Argentine

BUENOS AIRES, 9 Oct—Spanish giants Barcelona are interested in signing a 12-year-old Argentine, the boy's father told reporters. “It's an interesting offer. Barcelona have opened all the doors for us,” said Jose Lamela, whose son Erik plays for the youth team of Argentine club River Plate.

His mother Myram added: “If we have to travel, the whole family will go because we’re not going to separate.”

Argentine media say Barcelona have offered to pay Lamela's parents 120,000 euros a year for a four-year contract with their youth squad.

Lamela was spotted during a tournament in Spain which River won and he finished as top scorer.

River are regarded as having an outstanding youth training scheme, which has produced players like Argentina internationals Javier Saviola and Pablo Aimar. —MNA/Reuters

Woodgate to undergo treatment in US

MADRID, 9 Oct—England defender Jonathan Woodgate is to undergo treatment in the United States after his Real Madrid debut was put on hold due to the recurrence of a long-term thigh injury.

“Real Madrid medical staff have decided that Jonathan Woodgate will travel to the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in the United States … in order to complete his recovery from his injury,” the club said on their website on Friday.

“Once in the United States the most appropriate course of treatment will be decided upon. Thanks to new techniques of muscular regeneration it is hoped that Woodgate will be able to avoid undergoing surgery.” The central defender, who joined Real for 20 million euros (24.63 million dollars) from Newcastle United, is not expected to recover in time for this weekend’s La Liga clash with local rivals Atletico.

Woodgate, 24, was due to play in next Tuesday’s friendly against local Madrid side Alcorcon but he pulled up injured as he sprinted for the ball in training on Thursday.

Real Madrid’s chief of medical staff Alfonso del Corral said Woodgate had torn the same muscle in the front of his thigh.—MNA/Reuters

Kahn criticizes Lehmann for repeated claims

BERLIN, 9 Oct—Germany’s Oliver Kahn criticized teammate and rival Jens Lehmann on Friday for repeatedly claiming to be the country’s top goalkeeper.

“Lehmann is constantly provoking and he’s been doing it for years,” Kahn told Bild newspaper on Friday after the Arsenal goalkeeper said earlier in the week he expected to be first-choice keeper by the 2006 World Cup.

“I don’t have any problem with a rivalry, but it should be carried out on the pitch and not verbally,” said Kahn, 35, who is also Bayern Munich’s goalkeeper.

“Perhaps he wants me to quit,” added Kahn, who led Germany to the 2002 World Cup final but has since been stripped of the captaincy by new coach Jürgen Klinsmann.

“Or maybe he wants goalkeeper coach Sepp Maier to quit.

“The direction we’re headed isn’t good at all. It’s insane.”

Maier, who coaches Kahn at both national and club level, has repeatedly endorsed him ahead of Lehmann and did so again earlier of a friendly against Iran on Saturday. Maier was rebuked by Klinsmann for similar comments in August. —MNA/Reuters

England welcome back Euro 2004 sensation

LONDON, 9 Oct—England welcome back their Euro 2004 sensation Wayne Rooney on Saturday in what should be a pulsating World Cup qualifier against Wales at the teenager’s new Old Trafford home.

Rooney will not be the only player welcomed back to the international stage, though, as Sven-Goran Eriksson is expected to field his central defensive pairing from the 2002 World Cup.

Rio Ferdinand has completed an eight-month ban for missing a drugs test and has impressed for United, while Sol Campbell has recovered from an Achilles injury, leaving no room for reliable stand-ins John Terry and Ledley King.

Rooney, who lit up England’s campaign in Portugal with four goals in three group matches, is back after a foot injury suffered in their quarterfinal defeat in June by the host nation.

Though England and Group Six campaign hardly needs rescuing, after a 2-2 draw in Austria and a 2-1 victory in Poland last month, the 18-year-old’s comeback is bound to give them a lift.

Expectations were already being raised after Rooney marked his Manchester United debut two weeks ago with a Champions League hat-trick at old Trafford against Fenerbahce.

On Saturday, he is likely to start up front with Michael Owen, who should have shaken off a back injury, and in-form Jermain Defoe as coach Eriksson looks set to play with a three-man attack.

England, trailing group leaders Austria on goal difference, will hope to top on Saturday night — after the Austrians host Poland and before Wednesday’s qualifier in Azerbaijan. —MNA/Reuters

Borussia Dortmund reports highest-ever debt in German soccer history

DORTMUND (Germany), 9 Oct—Borussia Dortmund, European champions in 1997, reported the highest-ever debt in German soccer history on Friday.

Liabilities rose to 118.8 million euros (146.3 million US dollars) in the 2003/2004 year to June, up from 73.5 million euros on the previous 12 months.

The club also posted a loss of 97.7 million euros compared with a profit 3.3 million the previous year.

Borussia chairman Gerd Niebaum said they would roll up their sleeves to restructure the club. “We have probably made some misjudgements,” he told a news conference.

Dortmund are ninth in the 18-strong Bundesliga. —MNA/Reuters

Answers for yesterday's crossword puzzle

COUNTERW A IT S
A RE W E C E
B A N J O T O R M E N T
I S A E LT
N A R C O T I C S A I L
O M I N E
T O U P E E W A N D E R
I N S E
P O D R E A S URED
S N O R A I
T R E M B L E R U M B E R
E S T I E L O G
R E S I N T R A C E

Tough header: Belgium’s Mbo Mpenza (L) heads the ball against Spain’s Marchena (R) in a World Cup 2006 qualifier at Sardinero Stadium in Santander, northern Spain. —INTERNET

Top four seeds reach Filderstadt Grand Prix

FILDERSTADT (Germany), 9 Oct—The top four seeds reached the semifinals of the Filderstadt Grand Prix, but only French Open champion Anastasia Myskina being taken to three sets.

World number one Amelie Mauresmo took another step towards retaining the top spot when she dismissed American Lisa Raymond 6-4, 6-1 and second seed Lindsay Davenport ended the run of Serbian qualifier Jelena Jankovic 6-4, 6-3.

Third-seeded Myskina dropped the opening set to fellow Russian Elena Likhovtseva but won 6-4, 6-2 after her opponent received attention for dizziness and dehydration.

It wasn't going well throughout the match but I was very happy when I reached the tiebreak in the third and had the feeling that nothing could stop me,“ she said.

Myskina is to meet Russian qualifier Svetlana Kuznetsova, who also struggled in the first set against qualifier Fabiola Zuluaga but eased through the second set to win 6-4, 6-1.

Raymond, who lost qualifying but entered the main draw when Belgium’s Kim Clijsters withdrew with a wrist injury, offered a stern challenge early on, matching Mauresmo in some fiercely-contested rallies. But Mauresmo always held the advantage, serving well and keeping Raymond under pressure.

The French 25-year-old broke for a 4-3 lead in the first set, claiming Raymond’s serve after American had led 40-0. Mauresmo did not allow Raymond to hold serve at all in the second set and claimed victory in just 64 minutes. —MNA/Reuters

Spada defeats Melzer in Lyon

GRAND PRIX
LYON (France), 9 Oct—Seventh seed Vincent Spadea came back from the brink to defeat Jurgen Melzer 1-6, 6-1, 7-6 at the Lyon Grand Prix on Friday.

The American found himself 5-2 down in the third set of his quarterfinal but clawed his way back to force a tiebreak which he secured 7-2.

It wasn't going well throughout the match but I was very happy when I reached the tiebreak in the third and had the feeling that nothing could stop me,” he said.

Spadea is the last remaining seed in the event after number four Joachim Johansson was stunned 6-3, 6-4 in 58 minutes by fellow Swede Robin Soderling, ranked 47th in the world.

Johansson, who reached the semifinals of the US Open last month, said the match boiled down to a few vital points.

“I only lost my serve twice because Robin took advantage of the two break points he had and I missed the only one I got,” said the 22-year-old.

In the other two quarterfinals, Spaniard David Ferrer outwitted Sweden’s Jonas Bjorkman 6-2, 6-4 and Belgian Xavier Malisse defeated Russian Mikhail Youzhny 6-3, 6-4.—MNA/Reuters

Australia’s Glenn McGrath appeals successfully for the dismissal of India’s Virender Sehwag, unseen, during the fourth day of the first cricket test match between the two teams in Bangalore, India, Saturday, Oct. 9, 2004. —INTERNET

The New Light of Myanmar 11 October, 2004
11-10-2004 (Monday) (Programme Schedule)

Morning Transmission (9:00 - 10:00)

9:00 Signature Tune
9:02 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sentiment”
9:06 A Glimpse at the Mighty Loggers
9:10 Headline News
9:12 Let’s keep fit by exercise
9:10 Headline News
9:30 National News
9:35 50 Youths Art Exhibition
9:40 Myanmar Modern Song “Beautiful Ngapali”
9:45 National News
9:50 Myanmar Traditional Art, Silversmith
9:58 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”

11-10-2004 (Monday) Evening Transmission (15:30 - 17:30)

15:30 Signature Tune
15:32 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
15:36 A Glimpse at the Mighty Loggers
15:40 Headline News
15:42 Let’s keep fit by exercise
15:45 National News
15:50 Myanmar Spirulina (Ye Khar Lake)
15:55 Love Scene of Einuag Prince and Nan Kinnari Princesses
16:00 National News
16:05 50 Youths Art Exhibition
16:10 Myanmar Modern Song “Beautiful Ngapali”
16:15 National News
16:20 Myanmar Traditional Art, Silversmith
16:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sentiment”
16:30 National News
16:35 Manufacturing of Home Furniture and Accessories (Part-I)
16:40 New, Modernized Myanmar Food
16:45 National News
16:50 Marine Industries in Taungok Township
16:55 Group Dance Entitled “Pyant Pwa Sein”
17:00 National News
17:05 Myanmar Teddy Palm. A Source of Rural Income
17:10 Myanmar Modern Song “Let’s first love know”
17:12 Mother Pearl Mo- sac Painting
17:15 National News
17:20 The Decoration of Lacquerware (Stylus Drawing)
17:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”

Evening Transmission (19:30 - 23:30)

19:30 Signature Tune
19:32 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sentiment”
19:36 Maungmaung. The Seaside Village
19:40 Headline News
19:42 Wheat Handicraft Toys
19:45 National News
19:50 Myanmar Traditional Art, Silversmith
20:00 National News
20:05 Let’s visit underwater world
20:10 Myanmar Modern Song “You From Next Door”
20:15 National News
20:20 Melodious Flute tunes of the Villages
20:25 Myanmar Modern Song “Everlasting”
20:30 National News
20:35 Cruise on Min Kyan Sin
20:40 Historical Show Inpin Monastery
20:45 National News
20:50 Arts of Myanmar Traditional Artistic Tapestry
20:55 Scenic Beauty of Tiditt & Cultural Dance
21:00 National News
21:05 Bagan. Our Pride and Glory of the Past
21:10 Myanmar Modern Song “Placid and Greendale Lake”
21:15 National News
21:20 Travelogue (Inlay)
21:25 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Mingalabar”
21:35 A Glimpse at the Mighty Loggers
21:40 Headline News
21:42 Let’s keep fit by exercise
21:45 National News
21:50 Myanmar Spirulina (Ye Khar Lake)
21:55 Love Scene of Einuag Prince and Nan Kinnari Princesses
22:00 National News
22:05 50 Youths Art Exhibition
22:10 Myanmar Modern Song “Beautiful Ngapali”
22:15 National News
22:20 Myanmar Traditional Art, Silversmith
22:25 Myanmar Modern Song “A Way for Lovers”
22:30 National News
22:35 Manufacturing of Home Furniture and Accessories (Part-II)
22:40 New, Modernized Myanmar Food
22:45 National News
22:50 Marine Industries in Taungok Township
22:55 Group Dance Entitled “Pyant Pwa Sein”
23:00 National News
23:05 Myanmar Teddy Palm. A Source of Rural Income
23:10 Myanmar Modern Song “Let’s first love know”
23:12 Mother Pearl Mosaic Painting
23:15 National News
23:20 The Decoration of Lacquerware (Stylus Drawing)
23:28 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”

Monday, October 11

View on today:
7:00 am
1. Recitation of Paritas by Missionary Saydaw U Ommathara
7:25 am
2. To be healthy exercise
7:40 am
3. Morning news
7:45 am
4. Nice and sweet song
7:55 am
5. Song of national races
8:05 am
6. 抗议
8:10 am
7. Cute little dancers
8:20 am
8. ปฏิบัติการ
8:30 am
9. International news
8:45 am
10. Let’s Go
4:00 pm
1. Martial song

Rainfall on 10-10-2004
— nil at Yangon Airport,
— 0.04 inch at Kabay-Aye and,
— nil at central Yangon.
Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was
— 111.73 inches at Yangon Airport,
— 106.22 inches at Kabay-Aye and
— 108.62 inches at central Yangon.

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas

WEATHER

Sunday, October 10, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Chin, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, Magway Division and rain or thundershowers have been isolated to scattered in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay Division. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were PynOolwín (5.42) inches and Myitkyina (1.22) inches.

Maximum temperature on 9-10-2004 was 92°F. Minimum temperature on 10-10-2004 was 71°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 10-10-2004 was 85%.

Total sunshine hours on 9-10-2004 was (5.2) hours approx. Rainfall on 10-10-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, (0.04 inch) at Kabay-Aye and, nil at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was (111.73) inches at Yangon Airport, (106.22) inches at Kabay-Aye and (108.62) inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 7 mph from South at (17:30) hours MST on 9-10-2004.

Bay area: Weather is cloudy in South Bay and fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 11-10-2004: Light rain or thundershowers are likely to be scattered in Mon State, Ayeyawaddy and Taninthayi Divisions, isolated in Shan State, Yangon and Bago Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas.

Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Thunderstorms conditions in Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 11-10-2004: Possibility of isolated light rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 11-10-2004: Partly cloudy.

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MEC Vice-Chairman Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win unveils the signboard of multimedia classrooms at BEPS No 4 in Chanayethazan Township.— MNA

Victorious Myanmar women’s football team given warm welcome

YANGON, 10 Oct — Victorious Myanmar women’s football team which emerged champion in the First ASEAN Women’s Football Tournament held in Ho Chi Minh City of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam from 29 September to 9 October arrived back here by air this evening.

The victorious selected Myanmar women’s team comprising the manager, the coach and players totalling 23 led by Prof Daw Pandora Aung Gyi was given a warm welcome at Yangon International Airport by officials of the Ministry of Sports, members of the Panel of Patrons of Myanmar Women’s Sports Federation, the President of Myanmar Football Federation and officials, athletes and relatives of the victorious team with songs and dances.

MNA