**Four political objectives**
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order
- National reconsolidation
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

**Four social objectives**
- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

**Four economic objectives**
- Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

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**YANGON, 8 May** — A Youth Seminar of the Union Solidarity and Development Association took place this morning on a grand scale on at the sport ground near the Shwezigon Pagoda in Bagan Archaeological Region this morning.

It was attended by the Secretary-General, secretariat members and CEC members of the USDA and officials, secretaries, executives and regional coordinators of state and division USDAs, USDA youth members, presidents and members of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Association and Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, members of Red Cross Society and Auxiliary Fire Brigade and local people from nearby townships in Bagan Archaeological Region totaling over 12,000.

Mandalay Division USDA Secretary U Tin Maung Oo presided over the ceremony together with secretaries of 17 state and division USDAs. Ma Ke Khaing Soe of Mandalay Division acted as master of ceremonies and Ma Myat Noe Wai as co-MC.

After the MC’s announcement of the start of the seminar, those present saluted the State Flag.

Next, meeting chairman U Tin Maung Oo delivered a speech.

He said tabling the motion calling for “Building a modern developed nation through strength of youth” that will refresh political, economic and social developments at the youth seminar held at Bagan Archaeological Region are the national movement. The motions calling for condemning the terrorist acts that could lead to the danger of breaking up the Union are an important national concern.

(See page 8)
UMFCCI President meets with ROK Ambassador

YANGON, 8 May — Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Mr Lee Ju-Heum and Commercial Attaché Mr Choi Yong-tai and First Secretary Mr Hong Sung Wook met with UMFCCI President U Win Myint Kyu, General Secretary U Sein Htun Hwa, Chairman of Civil Service Selection and Training Board Dr Than Nyun, Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Li-Coil Khin Maung Kyaw, officials and relatives.

At the meeting, the Prime Minister said that as long as the local people have been able to make efforts for self-sufficiency in rice, green purpose and income generation of local people.

The Prime Minister proceeded to Thayet where he met District and Township authorities, departmental officials, USDA members, social organizations and town schoolers. At the meeting, the Prime Minister said that as long as the local people have been able to make efforts for self-sufficiency in rice and economic development, the entire Union will be able to enjoy strong economy and stand firmly on its feet.

It is, he added, unwise the nation places reliance on foreign assistance for its economic development, and it does not conform to the spirit and nationalistic fervour of the people who wish to stand on their own feet.

At a time when the government is making all-out efforts for national development, the people on their part are doing their bit in this regard.

The national development and the emergence of infrastructures needed for national development are due largely to the concerted efforts of the State and the people under the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe.

All in all, we would like to call upon local people and departmental officials to exert relentless efforts in Union for successful realization of the objectives of the government that is striving for equitable development throughout the nation.
China holding more hearings on price adjustments in tourist sites

Heifei, 7 May — China is holding more public hearings on ticket price adjustments on nationwide tourist sites, introducing more public opinions and suggestions.

The hearings follow price hearings on train tickets, water and electricity and environmental protection, after China issued provisional regulations on the public hearing system for price-related governmental decisions in 2001. A hearing in Beijing in November last year focused on disputed ticket price changes for six world heritage sites, including the Forbidden City and the Summer Palace.

"The main reason for the price rise lies in the financial pressure for preservation. Ticket revenue has to cover most operational costs in China's world heritage sites since governmental allocation covers only 30 per cent," said Li Gao, Assistant Director of the Summer Palace. "The price rise is also expected to control the excessive tourist flow."

The plan to raise ticket price of the six sites immediately triggered protests from the public, making it necessary to hold a hearing. Similar hearings have mushroomed nationwide on various topics.

The plan will take effect from June. — MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia says OPEC happy with its membership

Jakarta, 7 May — The Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) has no problem with Indonesia's membership, even if the country becomes a net crude oil importer, a top Indonesian official has said.

"Once you're inside, you continue to be a member. OPEC has no problem (with Indonesia's membership)," Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Purnomo Yusgiantoro was quoted on Friday by The Jakarta Post newspaper as saying.

He said that according to OPEC, what was important was that Indonesia, the organization's second-smallest producer, was a net exporter when it became a member.

The government has said that it was considering pulling out of the organization due to the country's falling crude oil output, which may lead to Indonesia becoming a net crude oil importer in the future.

A team tasked with reviewing the country's membership has recommended that Indonesia reduce its status from member to "observer" to avoid paying 1 million US dollars a year in fees.

The change would allow the country to be within the OPEC circle without spending much-needed budget money. Aging oil fields and lack of new exploration have caused the country's crude oil output has steadily declined by 5 per cent a year.

At present, Indonesia produces less than one million barrels a day, far below the 1.43 million barrels quota set by OPEC.

This low output made Indonesia a net crude oil importer for about four months last year. "We are still a (crude oil) net exporter now, although the difference is very small," Purnomo said.

Due to increasing fuel demand and the limited capacity of local refineries, Indonesia has also had to import 400,000 barrels of refined fuels a day, making the country a net buyer of fuel products, both unprocessed and refined.

Regarding total OPEC production, Purnomo said OPEC had not decided yet if it would add 500,000 barrels of oil a day to its quota in the market to ease oil prices. — MNA/Xinhua

The scenic Huangshan Mountain in east China's Anhui Province, for example, also decided to hold a hearing in March on ticket prices.

The price change was 20 per cent lower than the government's former plan and that the new ticket price plan will take effect from June. — MNA/Xinhua

India offers to assist in Iraq reconstruction

New Delhi, 8 May — Welcoming the formation of an new transitional government in Iraq, India on Saturday offered its assistance for reconstruction of the war-ravaged country and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in a message of congratulations to his Iraqi counterpart Ibrahim Al Jasrari, said India would like to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two countries.

Singh wished the Iraqi people success in their efforts towards building a peaceful, stable and prosperous Iraq.

"In keeping with India's long tradition of close political, economic and cultural ties with Iraq, the Prime Minister conveyed that India values and would like to further strengthen the bonds of friendship between two countries and peoples, and would be happy to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq and cooperation in areas of mutual interest," the External Affairs Ministry said in a statement. — MNA/PPI
FOREIGN MINISTERS FROM ASEAN, JAPAN, CHINA, S KOREA BEGIN TALKS

KYOTO, 7 May — Foreign ministers from ASEAN, Japan, China and South Korea began a meeting on Friday in central Japan’s ancient city Kyoto to discuss whether to allow India, Australia, New Zealand and the United States to participate in an East Asia Summit (EAS) in Kuala Lumpur in December this year.

The informal meeting of foreign minister from the Association of South-East Asian Nations and the three North-East Asian countries is expected to discuss the “concept and modalities” of the EAS.

The informal meeting is set to contribute to the discussions for an East Asia Summit in Kuala Lumpur which will conclude in December. This year marks the first meeting of East Asia Summit.

The meeting is aimed at speeding up the process of the EAS in the region.

The informal meeting includes discussions on the “concept and modalities” of the EAS.

Promoting gender equality is everyone’s responsibility

PUTRAJAYA (Malaysia), 8 May — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan said on Saturday that promoting gender equality was not only women’s responsibility but the responsibility of everyone.

The world recognized that gender equality was critical to the development and peace of every nation, Annan said in his message to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on the Advancement of Women here. The text of his message was made available to the Press at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, the venue of the meeting which proceeded with the senior official meeting.

He said there was no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women.

Although new challenges for women had emerged, like the trafficking of women and children, the increasing targeting of women in armed conflict and the terrifying growth of HIV/AIDS among women, they were not problems without solutions, Annan indicated.

“We have learnt what works and what doesn’t. If we are to change the historical legacy that puts women at a disadvantage in most societies, we must implement what we have learnt on a larger scale.”

“This year offers a precious opportunity for doing that, as the world’s leaders prepare to gather for a summit at the United Nations to review progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration, agreed in 2000 by all the world governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st Century,” he said.

Annan said that 10 years after the Beijing Conference on Women and Platform for Action on gender equality and the advancement of women, women were not only more aware of their rights but were more able to exercise them.

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Based on three selection criteria set by ASEAN, India’s participation in the EAS is almost certain, Australia and New Zealand, however, may first have to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation or TAC, a non-aggression pact ratified by all 10 ASEAN members.

The ASEAN foreign ministers agreed at their informal retreat last month in Mactan, Philippines, that only those countries, with substantive relations with ASEAN, full dialogue partner status and informal retreat last month, the leaders of the countries supported ASEAN’s decision to convene the first EAS in Malaysia in December Japan proposed hosting this informal meeting in Kyoto.

The foreign ministers are expected to decide and formalize the membership of the first EAS during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane in July.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Indonesian Govt establishes special anti-graft team

JAKARTA, 7 May — The Indonesian Government has formed a special team charged with the task of intensifying and improving the government’s anti-corruption campaign, a local newspaper reported on Friday.

The Coordinating Team for Corruption Eradication is aimed at speeding up the anti-corruption campaign, said The Jakarta Post. The drive, which was launched six months ago, has yet to record significant results.

Its members comprise prosecutors, police officers and officials of the Development Finance Controller (BPKP).

The 51-member team is chaired by Deputy Attorney General for special crimes Hendarmar Supandi.

The team will run for two years, but the term may be extended if deemed necessary.

It is assigned to investigate and prosecute graft cases, hunt down and arrest suspects, as well as tracing assets and investigating and prosecuting necessary.

The new team is obliged to report developments in their duties at any time to the President. Results of its activities must be presented to the President and his advisers every three months.

The first duty of the team will be to investigate possible graft cases in 16 state enterprises, four ministries and three private companies, as well as huff down 12 white collar swindlers who have fled abroad.

“We have decided to take necessary legal measures against 16 state enterprises, four ministries and three private companies,” Suslo said when installing the team members earlier Wednesday.

China commits to closer ten+3 cooperation

KYOTO, 7 May — Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing said here Friday China is willing to contribute to closer cooperation between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan and South Korea.

Li Zhaoxing made the remarks at an informal meeting of the foreign ministers of the 10-member ASEAN plus China, Japan and South Korea.

It is in the interest of all parties concerned to maintain the cooperation momentum of the 10+3 mechanism, which has become one of the most successful and vigorous mechanisms for regional cooperation, said the Chinese Foreign Minister.

ASEAN, established in 1967 groups Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (EAS), Li said the summit meeting is set to contribute to cooperation between East Asian countries and further development of the 10+3 mechanism. China respects ASEAN’s consensus on the summit and supports a leading role by the regional grouping in deciding which countries outside the framework can join the meeting, Li said.

China’s foreign ministers agreed last month in the Philippines that the first meeting of East Asia Summit will be held in Kuala Lumpur at the end of this year among countries that can maintain close dialogue with ASEAN, agree to accede to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, and have substantive relationship with ASEAN in politics, economics, culture and other fields.

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“This year offers a precious opportunity for doing that, as the world’s leaders prepare to gather for a summit at the United Nations to review progress in implementing the Millennium Declaration, agreed in 2000 by all the world governments as a blueprint for building a better world in the 21st Century,” he said.

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Japan says Australia, NZ likely to join East Asia Summit

KYOTO, 7 May — Japan on Friday backed bids by Australia and New Zealand to join the inaugural East Asia Summit scheduled for later this year.

A Japanese Government official, who declined to be named, indicated that it is highly likely that India, Australia and New Zealand would be participating in the summit.

The official said that foreign ministers from the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Japan, China and South Korea agreed at an informal meeting in Kyoto that these countries could join the summit.

The official said Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura proposed at the two-hour meeting that Japan host a senior working-level meeting involving ASEAN-plus-three countries next month in Tokyo to prepare for their formal meeting in Vientiane in July.

Machimura has also reportedly urged his counterparts to allow the United States to join the summit, to be held in Kuala Lumpur in December, as an observer. The proposal drew no significant reaction from the other ASEAN-plus-three foreign minister, the official said.

South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon also suggested at the meeting that the summit should be held biennially, and that the North-East Asian countries should also be allowed to host future summits.

The ministers discussed the agenda for the Asia-Europe meeting, the East Asia Summit, reforms in the United Nations, including the situation on the Korean Peninsula, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said in a brief interview.

Syed Hamid said the foreign ministers are expected to decide and formalize the membership of the first East Asia Summit during the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane in July.

China strictly controls brain surgery

BEIJING, 7 May — Chinese health official on Friday restressed that the brain surgery for eliminating drug addiction is strictly controlled because of its effectiveness and safety have not been proved and its side effects are still unclear.

Qi Guoming, chief of the Science and Education Department under the Health Ministry, said the surgery is still under clinical studies but not for clinical use.

"It is irresponsible and immoral to conduct the operation before an experimental conclusion is reached. Therefore, we are not resuming it," he said.

Brain surgery for curbing drug addicts is a key research field and the ministry is thinking about applying for national fund for scientific studies given by the Ministry of Science and Technology, said Qi.

Health Ministry’s spokesman Mao Qun said last month that brain surgery to curb drug cravings is a special medical practice. Those hospitals and doctors who perform the operation, as well as the equipment, environment and post-surgery observation, must be qualified and standardized.

Qi also stressed at the same day that before the ministry carries out a scheme and regulation for the clinical studies of brain surgery, any medical unit cannot perform the surgery in the name of clinical study or service.

Brain surgery was suspended on 2 November last year by the ministry because of disputes over its unidentifiable side effects among medical experts. Evaluation and argument of the operation have been lasting ever since. The ministry in March held a special meeting on this topic in Shaanxi Province, at which experts and officials agreed that the brain surgery is still in the phase of clinical studies and cannot be used in clinical service.

No signs of bird flu detected in areas near DMZ

SEOUL, 7 May — The South Korean Government said on Friday it has found no evidence of avian influenza among birds in areas just south of the demilitarized zone (DMZ) that separates the two Koreas.

The National Veterinary Research and Quarantine Service said extensive tests of wild birds and their droppings had found no traces of the disease in nearby regions.

Wild birds can catch the avian influenza virus from infected birds. The disease can be transmitted to humans, but no fatalities have ever been reported in South Korea.

The service under the Agriculture Ministry said it set up a special task force after North Korea formally announced an outbreak of the deadly avian virus on 27 March.

Pyongyang, which reportedly destroyed a large number of birds, has requested assistance from Seoul to provide it with disinfectants and detection equipment.

South Korea banned the import of all poultry from North Korea in mid-March after there was strong evidence of a bird flu outbreak in the recluse country.

Seoul also stepped up efforts to prevent the virus from entering the country by conducting extensive decontamination efforts at checkpoints used by civilians to move to and from North Korea and at major harbors.

The quarantine service said it will continue to monitor areas south of the DMZ to detect any signs of the bird flu virus.

South Korea usually issues bird flu outbreak alerts in late fall to early spring because migratory birds can spread the virus during their transit over the country.

MNA/Xinhua

Philippine province declares state of calamity due to El Nino

MANILA, 7 May — The southern Philippine province of south Cotabato has declared the entire province under a state of calamity due to the continuing onslaught of the El Nino phenomenon that has damaged close severely agricultural crops.

Reynaldo Legaste, chair of the provincial task force on El Nino, said on Friday the 12-man board unanimously approved the declaration.

"(The board) also approved an appropriation of 15 million peso (270,000 US dollars) to fund our proposed rehabilitation activities which would focus on the agriculture sector," Legaste said.

As of Tuesday, Legaste said the total damage wrought by the drought in the province’s 10 towns and lone city reached near 100 million pesos (1.85 million US dollars).

He said drought has affected 11,458 hectares of crops (4,3000 hectares for palay and 7,158 hectares for corn).

MNA/Xinhua

Mortar attack targets US-Iraqi military checkpoint in Fallujah

FALLUJAH, 7 May — A mortar attack hit a checkpoint jointly manned by US and Iraqi forces in southern Fallujah, causing casualties, witnesses said on Friday.

US and Iraqi soldiers opened fire randomly while responding to the attack which took place Thursday night and killed a civilian and wounded three others, witnesses at the scene said.

"We have received a body and three injured people, one of them in serious condition," a Fallujah hospital doctor told Xinhua. Fighting in the Sunni Muslim enclave, some 50 kilometers west of Baghdad, still flares as sporadic attacks were launched from time to time on US and Iraqi forces.

MNA/Xinhua

Cambodian newly wed has traditional photos taken as her wedding party look on before a rain storm falls in Phnom Penh recently.—INTERNET

A worker fixes electricity cables in Vientiane on 7 May, 2005. —INTERNET
Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore to discuss security in Malacca Strait

JAKARTA, 7 May — Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia are to discuss the security in the Malacca Strait, where the threat of piracy has been on the rise recently, Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman said here on Friday.

The three littoral countries would discuss the issues of terrorism, sea robbery and smuggling in the strait, said Yuyi Thamrin, the spokesman.

Several Indonesian and Japanese ships have been targeted by the sea robbery on the narrow channel recently.

"There has been an understanding among the foreign ministers of Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia to meet, to discuss these problems in the aspect of politics," he said. However the spokesman is not sure of the date of the meeting.

To improve security in the Strait, Indonesia in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) would establish an information centre in Batam Island in Westermost Indonesia, near Singapore, Thamrin added.

"We would cooperate with the IMO to set up an information centre" he said.

On 28 April, Singapore, Japan, Laos and Cambodia signed Regional Co-operation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ship in Asia (ReCAAP) and agreed to establish an information centre in Singapore. Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore have carried out a coordinated patrol since last year and decided that other countries may contribute to the capacity building. The Strait is passed by about 500,000 ships a year, carrying two thirds of oil for the world trade.—MNA/Xinhua

Annan to attend WWII commemorations in Moscow

UNITED NATIONS, 7 May — UN Secretary-General Koofi Annan heads to Moscow this weekend to participate in the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War, UN Spokesman Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

While in Moscow, Annan may hold a number of bilateral meetings with a number of Heads of State and government who are also participating in the ceremonies, Dujarric said. On the sidelines of these commemorations, the Secretary-General is scheduled to join the other members of the Middle East Quartet, which includes the European Union, the Russian Federation and the United States, for a working meeting, the spokesman noted.

Also attending will be the Quartet’s Special Envoy James Wolfensohn and the US Security Coordinator William Ward, who will brief the Quartet members on the situation on the ground and the latest developments regarding the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the West Bank, Dujarric added.

According to the spokesman, Annan will then travel to Geneva, where on 11 May he will host a mini-summit with President Olusugun Obasanjo of Nigeria and President Paul Biya of Cameroon to discuss their border dispute on Bakassi Peninsula.—MNA/Xinhua

Internet alert system to fight against counterfeit drugs

MANILA, 7 May — An Internet alert system has been established as the World Health Organization (WHO) launches its war against counterfeit drugs, the regional office said on Friday.

Regional Director for the WHO’s Western Pacific Office Shigeru Omi said in a news conference that the global health body has unveiled its Rapid Alert System (RAS), the world’s first web-based system for tracking the activities of drug cheats, in light of the increasing severity of the counterfeit drugs.” The counterfeit drugs trade is an organized trans-national crime. It spans the world and affects both rich countries and poor ones,” he said.

According to the WHO’s statistics, between 6 per cent and 10 per cent of medicine on the world market is reported to be counterfeit with estimated sales of over 35 billion US dollars a year.

In the Southeast Asia, in particular, 10 per cent of the total on the market are estimated fakes.

"Mainly, it is the developing countries that suffer. Unlike in the West, most do not have the financial means or the infrastructure to detect and respond to counterfeit medicines," Omi said.

He said, however, the counterfeit medicines have not so far attracted enough attention they deserve.

"The people who produce fake drugs operate in the shadows. We’re not sure who they are. And we’re not sure where they are based. But we know one thing for certain: They are very dangerous and very cynical," he added.

The Rapid Alert System, as the director explained, will facilitate the public who believe they have come across counterfeit drugs to go online to report what they have discovered and attain the assessment of the specialists.

Through the Internet, the news about the counterfeit medicines can be spread around the region and then around the world to warn more public and help law enforcement agencies to track drug counterfeiters, he added.

However, Omi noted that as the WHO’s first attempt to fight against the counterfeit drugs, the alert system cannot solve the problems overnight but only to increase public awareness, promote rapid and transparent information sharing, and obtain commitment of the governments and other sectors to address the problem.

"We believe that unless firm and committed action is taken, anarchy will set in and the public trust in pharmaceuticals will be dangerously eroded," he said.

Pakistan, India to move forward for dispute resolution

KUALA LUMPUR, 7 May — The time had come for India and Pakistan to move forward from the dispute management stage to a phase of dispute resolution, visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said here on Friday.

"Both President (Pervez) Musharraf and I have met Indian leaders on several occasions to take the dialogue process forward. President Musharraf’s recent visit to New Delhi yielded important results and made progress on confidence-building measures," Aziz said in a keynote address at Malaysia-Pakistan business and economic forum, organized by the Asian Strategic and Leadership Institute (ASLI) of Malaysia.

He said that at present people contacts as well as economic and trade links between the two countries had been restored, and they had agreed to facilitate interaction among Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control.

Touching on terrorism, the Prime Minister said Pakistan had embraced a strategy of enlightened moderation to promote inter-civilization harmony where, on one hand, it called on Muslims to reject extremism and pursue reforms.

"On the other hand, the West must help in alleviating and socio-economic back-wardness that bred extremism and violence. Speaking on Paki-stan’s nuclear capability, Aziz said the country was opposed to an arms race, conventional or non-conventional, and this was the reason it offered to work for a strategic restraint regime with India. "Pakistan is also committed to nuclear non-proliferation. Following the 1998 tests that established Pakistan as an overt nuclear power, we have instituted a strong National Command Authority for effective command and control of our strategic assets. Our nuclear capability is now a factor of regional security and stability," he said.

MNA/Xinhua

Indian women buy watermelons on the bank of the river Ganges, in Allahabad, India, on 7 May, 2005.—INTERNET

Transvestite beauty pageant contestant Tantumpee Ruksumantisri, left, reacts to winning the Miss Tiffany’s Universe pageant as runner up Pheeraya Runangroongroj, right, offers congratulations on late 7 May, 2005, in Pattaya, Thailand. —INTERNET
NASA engineers try to retrieve Mars rover by earth test

LOS ANGELES, 8 May — Aiming to retrieve the Mars rover Opportunity, engineers are using a testing laboratory to simulate Mars surface conditions, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of US space agency NASA said on Friday.

Careful test is necessary before any commands for Opportunity to move and continue exploring. The rover has plunged in a small dune days ago, said the JPL in a statement.

The rover team has cooked up recipes combining various sandy and powdery materials for the best simulation of the dune where Opportunity dug itself into wheel-hub depth last week.

Opportunity had driven about 40 metres of a planned 90-metre drive on the rover’s 446th martian day when its wheels began slipping on April 26. The rover was driving backwards then.

The team frequently alternates between backward and forwards driving to keep wheel lubrication well distributed. The wheels kept rotating enough times to have covered the rest of the distance if they hadn’t been slipping, but it is eventually barely inching forward.

After a turn at the end of the planned drive, Opportunity sensed that it had not turned properly and stopped moving.

“We choose to proceed cautiously, so we don’t expect to begin actually driving out of the dune before next week, possibly later,” said Jim Erickson, rover project manager at JPL.

“Both Opportunity and Spirit have already provided many more months of scientific exploration than anyone expected. By taking good care of them, we hope to keep them exploring for many more months to come. Tests so far have sustained our optimism about Opportunity’s ability to drive out of this well as traditional dust storms are expected to progress ahead to understand how robust that capability is.”

Opportunity is positioned across the ridge of an elongated dune or ripple of soft sand that is about one-third metre tall and 2.5 metres wide. Engineers said this ripple is different in that it seems to be a little taller and to have a steeper slope, about 15 degrees on part of its face.

Last week, engineers arranged a simulated dune using sand that was already at JPL’s rover testing facility and put a test rover into a comparably dug-in position.

“The test rover had no difficulty driving away, even when sunk in belly-deep.”

Below normal rainfall to affect

Tanzanian harvest

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 8 May — A senior meteorologist in Tanzania has warned that below-normal rainfall may affect this season’s food crop harvest in many parts of the East African country.

Martin Lukando, acting director-general of the Tanzania Meteorological Agency (TMA), told the Press that except for the Victoria Lake Basin area, most regions of the country were expected to get rainfall that was below average for this time of year.

“Most of the food crops were in the early flowering stages in many parts of the country and the harvests are likely to be poor,” said the meteorologist.

“This year’s long rainy season is expected to last until the end of May. However, the north coastal areas which include Dar-es-Salaam, Tanga, Coats, Morogoro, North Pemba, and Zanzibar islands will only get rains until this month,” added Lukando.

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Tanzanian harvest

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NASA engineers try to retrieve Mars rover by earth test

LOS ANGELES, 8 May — Aiming to retrieve the Mars rover Opportunity, engineers are using a testing laboratory to simulate Mars surface conditions, the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of US space agency NASA said on Friday.

Careful test is necessary before any commands for Opportunity to move and continue exploring. The rover has plunged in a small dune days ago, said the JPL in a statement.

The rover team has cooked up recipes combining various sandy and powdery materials for the best simulation of the dune where Opportunity dug itself into wheel-hub depth last week.

Opportunity had driven about 40 metres of a planned 90-metre drive on the rover’s 446th martian day when its wheels began slipping on April 26. The rover was driving backwards then.

The team frequently alternates between backwards and forwards driving to keep wheel lubrication well distributed. The wheels kept rotating enough times to have covered the rest of the distance if they hadn’t been slipping, but it is eventually barely inching forward.

After a turn at the end of the planned drive, Opportunity sensed that it had not turned properly and stopped moving.

“We choose to proceed cautiously, so we don’t expect to begin actually driving out of the dune before next week, possibly later,” said Jim Erickson, rover project manager at JPL.

“Both Opportunity and Spirit have already provided many more months of scientific exploration than anyone expected. By taking good care of them, we hope to keep them exploring for many more months to come. Tests so far have sustained our optimism about Opportunity’s ability to drive out of this well as traditional dust storms are expected to progress ahead to understand how robust that capability is.”

Opportunity is positioned across the ridge of an elongated dune or ripple of soft sand that is about one-third metre tall and 2.5 metres wide. Engineers said this ripple is different in that it seems to be a little taller and to have a steeper slope, about 15 degrees on part of its face.

Last week, engineers arranged a simulated dune using sand that was already at JPL’s rover testing facility and put a test rover into a comparably dug-in position.

“The test rover had no difficulty driving away, even when sunk in belly-deep.”

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A similar condition is expected to be experienced by northeastern Tanzania that includes the province-like regions as Kilimanjaro, Arusha and Manyara.
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It is known to all, the economy of the State was in deep recession together with the 1988 anarchic disturbances. From 1988 to the present education sector which is important for development of human resources. There are 40,521 primary, middle and high schools and 156 universities and colleges in various parts of the country. The number of hospitals has risen to 819 from 631. Life expectancy of the people has considerably improved.

In political sector, over 1,080 delegates from other hand, organizations that serve the interest of the nation like USDA are making endeavours for emergence of a peaceful modern developed nation in cooperation with the millions of people upholding Our Three Main National Causes. Constructive strength and a handful of destructive elements are vying each other.

The time of being crushed by the strength of the people for those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views are getting nearer. He pledged to make endeavors for development of the motherland and hailed the success of the seminar.

Sai Kyaw Soe Hlaing of Shan State (South) tabled a motion calling for building a modern and developed nation through the strength of youth. He said that the Union of Myanmar which is home to over 100 national races has set a goal to build a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation.

(See page 9)
All the national races are to live together with Union Spirit keeping nest and eggs intact without selfish thought.

Recently, Brigade No 11 of Shan State National Army (SSNA) led by U Kan Na and Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA) led by U Aik Mone held ceremonies to unconditionally exchange arms for peace in their respective regions. Hence, local people have now been able to engage in regional development task. Therefore, today’s Youth Seminar heartily welcomed the armed groups.

Altogether over 64,000 Myanmar workers become jobless owing to the closure of the factories and mills, thereby hurting the socio-economic life of families countable by the thousand, who are depending on those workers. In addition, services, house rentals, hostels and restaurants that are related to the workers have been hit due to the closure of the factories and mills.

Myanmar is rich in natural resources. Thanks to implementation of dams, river water pumping projects and underground water tapping projects apart from natural water resources, the country has water sufficient for agricultural purpose. However, the country lagged behind in sectoral development due to exploitation of colonials for over one hundred years and destructive acts of insurgents. After assumption of the State responsibilities in 1988, the Tatmadaw Government rebuilt the nation day in, and day out.

Nowadays, 17 armed groups had returned to the legal fold due to efforts of the Tatmadaw Government, and the groups join hands with the Government for development of their regions and the nation. At present, the country has restored peace and tranquillity.

Recently, Brigade No 11 of Shan State National Army (SSNA) led by U Kan Na and Palaung State Liberation Army (PSLA) led by U Aik Mone held ceremonies to unconditionally exchange arms for peace as a milestone in the history of the Union of Myanmar. He said that at a time when today’s technologies are advancing in the global countries, we must study and develop modern technologies for building Myanmar as a modern country.

To be able to apply modern technologies, human resources are being nurtured in the basic and higher education sectors. At the same time, efforts are being made to increase the number of scientists and technocrats. That is why all the youth are to make utmost efforts for development of human resource at present and future as well. Nowadays, sectoral development has been made in the entire nation. GDP of the country has increased from K 76,243 million in 1988 to K 8,998,907 to date, and per capita income K 1,940 in 1988 to K 165,729 to date. There was 22.49 per cent inflation rate in 1988, but 4.33 per cent at present. It can be said that the fruitful results were made with harmonious efforts by the State, the people and the Tatmadaw.

While building a modern and developed nation, concerted efforts are being made for emergence of a democratic nation that unconditionally exchanged arms for peace as a milestone in the history of the Union of Myanmar. The discipline-flourishing democracy system is a genuine democracy system and it is a political power to implement Our Three Main National Causes — Non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

Therefore, the seven-step Road Map is being implemented to be able to shape a discipline-flourishing democratic nation. In this regard, the National Convention is being convened to draw a new State Constitution that is the first and most important step. Over 1,000 delegates including delegates of national races, that of workers and peasants, that of political parties, that of representatives-elect, that of intellectuals and intelligentsia, that of State Service Personnel, that of armed groups which exchanged arms for peace and other means, while efforts are being made for national development.

Up to date, they have laid down 104 State basic principles and detailed basic principles for sharing of powers in the State, the Head of State, legislative, executive and judicial sectors unanimously. In addition, the delegates have submitted detailed basic principles for sharing executive and judicial powers. The National Convention has now made progress to certain extent.

There arose subversive acts of internal and external destructive ele-
Mandalay Division USDA
Secretary U Tin Maung Oo—MNA

We the youths had made up our mind to strongly condemn the acts of the terrorists and prevent them. There has flourished a fine tradition of discharging the national defence duty out of own volition in every citizen with the concept that the national defence duty is the inborn duty of every citizen.

We have the right to life, the right to seek and enjoy development, and the right to a healthy environment. In this world, there is no one who has been able to cause disintegration of the country. This is the essence of the Union. We believe that the Union is like a world, where the people are living together. Thus, we are trying to overcome the weaknesses of the previous era and to bring about eternal peace.

The unconditional exchange of arms for peace is a meaningful matter that the entire people longed for in order to bring about eternal peace. Only when there is eternal peace will the nation-building endeavours meet with success. With this concept, Brigade-11 of SSNA led by U Aik Mone and PSLA led by U Aik Mone established eternal peace through unconditionally exchanging arms for peace on 12 and 29 April respectively. The national people including local people warmly welcomed Brigade-11 of SSNA led by U Kan Na and PSLA led by U Aik Mone for their establishment of eternal peace.

She said that the entire national people hope that other national race armed groups who had made peace will do so, and extend a warm welcome to them. She pledged that all the youths will do their bit in successful realization of the 2005-2006 national objectives for the emergence of a peaceful modern and developed nation.

She also reiterated that all the youths will actively participate together with the national people in successful realization of the seven-point Road Map for the emergence of a democratic system with fully institutionalized discipline. She said the mass of youths together with the national people will make all-out efforts for the success of the seven-point Road Map that guarantees the emergence of a peaceful modern and developed nation.

Kyaw Zin Win of Bago Division—MNA
At a time when the government is building a peaceful, modern and developed nation, the aims and acts of renegade Sao Hkam Hpa and cohorts are simply meant for causing destruction. Hence, the youth seminar denounced renegade Sao Hkam Hpa and cohorts.

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Lt-Gen Maung Bo inspects development…
(from page 16)
At Daukyat village in Bilin Township, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party inspected laying of granite on 26-mile long Daukyat-Kyapan road.
At the briefing hall of Max Myanmar company which is engaged in growing 5000 acres of rubber in Shweyaungmya village in Bilin Township, U Zaw Zaw Chairman of the company briefed Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party on cultivation of rubber. Lt-Gen Maung Bo urged officials to extend cultivation of rubber in the interests of the state, the region and in their own. Next, they inspected rubber plantations by car. According to the rubber growing project of Max Myanmar, 1000 acres will be put under rubber in 2004-2005, 2005-2006 and the remaining 2000 in 2006-2007.
In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party arrived at Donhami Bridge at the border of Mon and Kayin States. They were welcomed there by Kayin State PDC Chairman Col Khin Kyaw and officials. At Hlaingwe People’s Hospital, Lt-Gen Maung Bo heard reports presented by officials on health care services in Hlaingwe township and progress in construction of new 50-bed hospital and attended to the needs. At the hospital Deputy Director-General of Health Department Dr Hla Pe presented an Air Sep worth 1.5 million kyats for the hospital through Dr Kyaw Kyaw Soe and officials.
They next viewed round the construction site.

World Red Cross Day…
(from page 16)
control of diseases, promotion of health education and giving health education talks to the people.
In conclusion, I recognized the Red Cross members’ brilliant performance of public welfare services and put them in my record and I wish the members would be able to shoulder the Red Cross activities with added momentum in the interests of the nation and the people.
Next, MRCS President Dr Hla Myint gave a speech. Leader of the representatives of International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Mr Joanna MacLance read out the message jointly sent by the chairman of International Committee of the Red Cross, President of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint, Vice-President of MRCS and executives, diplomats and officials.

All the national races …
(from page 10)
During the time of the Tatmadaw, internal and external destructive elements are trying to disrupt its efforts. So, people have made a vow to crush all internal and external destructive elements as common enemy.
At a time when there reigns national solidarity and unity, destructive elements holding negative views, perpetrators and fugitives are committing destructive acts, planting bombs in public places and shooting the people with every intention of causing disintegration of the Union. They have been committing such subversive acts as murder, arson, bomb blasts, planting mines and robbery since 1948.
She continued to say that on 21 April this year, KNU insurgents robbed two cargo trucks and one passenger express on route from Dawei to Yangon at mile post 33/2 on Dawei-Ye road section, and two members of police force, a faculty member of Dawei University, one student, three passengers and one conductor were shot dead. Similarly, KNPP insurgents booted blasted tower post No 103 linking Lawpita electric power station in Lloik and Taungoo on 22 April. On 26 April, three innocent people were killed and 15 others injured in a bomb blast planted by insurgents on the ground floor of Zegyo Market in Mandalay.
Likewise, bomb explosions occurred in Yangon on 7 May—at the Yangon Trade Centre in Mingala Taungnyunt at 2.50 pm, at the Junction-8 Centre in Mayangon Township at 2.55 pm and at the Dagon Centre in Sagyungyone Township at 3 pm. The brutal acts were committed in collusion by terrorist groups such as KNU, SSA led by Ywet Sit, KNPP insurgents and NCGUP led by expatariate Sein Win. The blasts left 11 innocent people and monks dead and 162 others injured.
We the youths had made up our mind to strongly condemn the acts of the terrorists and prevent those acts. There has flourished a fine tradition of discharging the national defence duty out of own volition in each and every citizen with the concept that the national defence duty is the inborn duty of every citizen. The youths of today who have grown up in the present era are willing to safeguard the State and the people and they take a pride in serving the national interest. That is why they enthusiastically join the Tatmadaw yearly.
There arose accusations of some western nations that there has been recruitment of minors in the Myanmar army. He spoke at length on the directive No 13/3 of Defence Council in connection with joining military service in Myanmar, formation of committee for prevention against recruitment of minors for military service chaired by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein and supervision in accord with the directives.
He said it is obvious that the youths themselves discharge defence duties actively as inborn and national duty. Some western nations and their allies accused Myanmar of recruiting minors. They are doing so intentionally because they do not want Myanmar to be strong in defence power. The entire youths will serve defence duty as a force and the seminar declare that it opposes and condemns the false accusations. Only when all destructive elements are removed, can we march towards the national goals. Therefore, he seconded the motion tabled by Sai Kyaw Soe Hlaing.
Next, the Chairman approved the proposal “to build a modern developed nation through strength of youth” and discussions. The youths to the seminar took five oaths of USDA youth members. Those present at the seminar chanted slogans of non-disintegration of the Union, Non-disintegration of national solidarity, Perpetuation of Sovereignty and success of the seven-point Road Map and the seminar came to a close at 7.55 am.—MNA

Lt-Gen Maung Bo, the commander and party also inspected development of Hlaingwe by car. At the construction site of two-storey building of Hlaingwe Basic Education High School, officials reported to Lt-Gen Maung Bo and party on progress of work. The commander made a supplementary report. At 3.30 pm, Lt-Gen Maung Bo met with Tatmadawmen and family members at the hall of local battalion and urged them to take part in regional development undertakings hand in hand with local people and to conduct agricultural and livestock breeding tasks on a manageable scale. Later, they arrived at the hall of Hpa-an Station and met Tatmadawmen and their families. Lt-Gen Maung Bo urged officials at different levels to make endeavours for the welfare of family members and to take part in regional development drive. — MNA

Essay competition to mark World Environmental Day to be held
YANGON, 8 May — National Commission for Environmental Affairs will hold open class essay competition to mark World Environmental Day for 2005 in accord with a motto ‘Green Cities: Plan for the Planet!’. To lay down project for metropolis is of great importance as majority of world population has been residing there. By doing so, millions of people will be living in green and lush environment.
Entries are invited in accord with the motto reflecting re-cycling of waste products in cities, preservation of natural resources, environmental protection tasks which ought to be carried for public health and green cities. Essays are to be written at least four A-4 size pages by computer. Entries are to be attached with participant’s name, citizenship scrutiny card number and address.
Winners of essay competition will be awarded prizes at the ceremony to mark World Environmental Day for 2005. Entries are to be sent to office of NCEA opposite the building of the Ministry of Forestry on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road in Yankin Township not later than 27 May. — MNA

Member of Administrative Body of Huinzigon Home for the aged Dr Daw May Min Win Aung Khin accepts cash by U Kyin Shein, Daw Khin Yi, U Ye Myint, Daw Li Li Shein of No 30 B, 101 st Street, Mingalatayawunyay Township to mark the birthday of U Kyin Shein. — (8)
Cocoa farmgate price downs in Nigeria

LAGOS, 7 May — Cocoa farmgate price in south-western Nigeria, the world’s fourth largest cocoa producer, has fallen again and farmers were selling at about $985 (about 8,950 naira) a ton Friday from last week’s $1,400 (about 10,611 naira). Julius Akinlotan, a buyer in Oyo State said that cocoa bean price was falling apparently because the bean size was small and that buyers are showing less interest. “The bean sizes is not quite encouraging, buyers are not too keen to put money on the cocoa beans in the market now. We expect an improvement in size and weight since the rainy season has come,” another buy echoed in Ondo State. Heavy rainfall in the region during sweeping through the entire southwest cocoa belt since Wednesday when the first major rain of the 2005 rainy season fell. “The rains are welcome, they are good but we fear the downpours may make cocoa sun-drying very difficult in the days ahead,” Akinlabi Omotayo, manager of the Cooperative Produce Marketing Union in Oyo State, said. Cocoa prices may go down further when the rainy season is fully established and cocoa sun-drying becomes difficult, buyers predicted.

Meanwhile, a Lagos-based exporter, Kola Akinbami said the price of graded cocoa, which has been certified fit for export, stood at $150,000 (about 1,363 dollars) a ton Friday, some 5,000 naira (about 38 dollars) down from last week. The southwest cocoa belt accounts for 70 per cent of Nigeria’s annual cocoa production of 242,000 tons.

N-W China solicits donations for rare wild horses

Urumqi, 7 May — Donations are welcome to help raise the species of wild horses, Xinjiang Equus Przewalskii Poliakov, according to sources with the Wildlife Protection Association and Wild Horse Reproduction Research Centre of north-west China’s Xinjiang Uygar Autonomous Region. The call for donations, the first of this kind ever in Xinjiang, targets private individuals and organizations. Anyone who donates 2,000 yuan (about 241 US dollars) can help raise a wild horse for a year. Donors can choose the horse they wish to raise, name it, and receive certificates and medals. Those who donate for a 10-year tenure will be endowed with the right of raising right of wild horses. Thirty-six horses will be among the first raised, with the activity ending in late May. Similar activities will be held annually. Xinjiang Equus Przewalskii Poliakov originated in Xinjiang and is considered a rare species. The Russian traveller Przewalski captured some of the animals during a visit to the region and took them to Europe. The wild horses have become extinct in China, but there were about 100 in European and American zoos. — MNA/Xinhu
Study shows antioxidant enzyme prolong animal lifespan

LOS ANGELES, 7 May—Higher levels of an antioxidant enzyme in cells have significantly extended the life of genetically modified mice in lab, US scientists reported on Thursday.

The mice also exhibited less heart disease and other age-related declines, said researchers at the University of Washington School of Medicine. Their study, published online by the journal Science on 5 May, supports the controversial free-radical theory of aging.

The theory suggests that very reactive chemicals, called “free radicals,” can be damaging to the body at the cellular level. Those reactive chemicals can take part in unnecessary chemical reactions that can damage the cell components including DNA.

Some researchers believe that free radicals could contribute to or hasten heart disease, cancer, and other age-related diseases. The theory also suggests that if the body could be protected from those free radicals, then age-related diseases could be tamed and people may be able to live longer.

In this new study, the researchers led by Peter Rabochnovitch, a professor at the University of Washington School of Medicine, focused the study on catalase, an enzyme in the body that helps convert hydrogen peroxide into water and oxygen.

Hydrogen peroxide is a waste product of metabolism and it can be the precursor of free radicals that can damage the cell. The damage can in turn lead to more flaws in the cell’s chemical processes, making a vicious cycle that leads to more free radicals and more cellular damage.

The researchers studied mice with a genetic variation that made them produce more human catalase, the enzyme that breaks down hydrogen peroxide. They targeted the liver of the catalase to different areas of the cell: the cytoplasm, where catalase normally goes to decompose hydrogen peroxide; the nucleus, the DNA containing “control centre” for the cell; and the mitochondria, the cell’s power plant that converts organic matter into energy.

They compared the different groups of mice to a control group and found that increased production of catalase could affect the mouse lifespan. The mice with higher catalase levels in the mitochondria, dubbed the MCAT group, had about a 20-per-cent increase in average and maximum lifespan, or about four and a half months.—MNA/Xinhua

Mexican President calls for national unity

MEXICO CITY, 7 May—Mexican President Vicente Fox on Thursday called on the Mexicans for national unity in the celebration of the 143rd anniversary of the Battle of Puebla, in which the Mexican Army defeated the French expeditionary force.

“With the Battle of Puebla, we have to re-member that national unity is our most impor-tant defence, which gets stronger in diversity and lays the foundations for our progress,” he said.

The path of frater-nity, dialogue and unity is the one we could best use for the defence of our de-mocracy, Fox said in Puebla, a city 125 kilometres east of the capital.

Fox made the appeal for unity after the National Attorney General’s office dropped charges against Mexico City Mayor Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador that he abused his power by ignoring a judge’s order to stop the construction of a hospital access road on private land.

Under the Mexican law, those charged with a crime cannot run for of-fice. Lopez Obrador, who commands a strong lead in the latest opinion polls in the 2006 presidential race, argued that Fox’s government trumped up the case to keep him out of the elections.

Indian scientists major contributors at Weizmann Institute

JERUSALEM, 7 May—Indian scientists at Israel’s Weizmann Institute of Science, which is working with India in the field of biotechnology, are precious contributors to its growing reputation as a premier institute of scientific research.

Indian scientists form one of the three largest overseas communities at the Institute.

“the community is a precious contributor to the growing reputation of the institute as the premier institution for scientific research,” Ian Chet, President of the Weizmann Institute, told PTI.

Chet told Indian Ambassador, Arun Kumar Singh, at a meeting on Thursday that the institute has been cooperating with India in various research fields, especially in the field of biotechnology.

He lauded the efforts of the Indian scientists in various areas of research at the institute, mostly in post-doctoral fellows.

Tata motors sets 20% export target

NEW DELHI, 8 May—Tata Motors, India’s larg-est integrated automobile maker, has set a target of exporting 20 per cent of its total production in fis-cal 2005-06, Indo-Asian News Service reported Saturday.

Tata Motors’ Chair-man Ratan Tata said in Bangalore on Friday night that the company had a lot of export markets to tap and cater to, besides eye-ing Latin America and Africa as prospective mark-ets this year.

On future plans, Tata said the company was working on exploring its product range in both the commercial and passen-ger segments so as to meet the demands of mo-toring people and goods carriers.

NMA/Xinhua

Official says climatic changes affects Rwandan economy

KIGALLY, 7 May—Climatic changes have led to poor harvests and affected economic growth in Rwanda despite its gross domestic (GDP) in-creased to 3.9 per cent in 2004 from 0.9 per cent in the previous year, an official said here on Friday.

According to Minis-ter of Finance and Eco-nomic Planning Monique Nsanzabaganwa, the gov-ernment is investing to raise agricultural produc-tivity by extending finance services to farmers to al-low them invest in ferti-lizers, introduce improved seed varieties and better drainage and storage sys-tems that can bear with the climatic changes.

Poor harvest had a bad effect on the economy since 90 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for its liveli-hood. As a result, there have been increased im-ports of food items which grew by over 53 per cent last year, she said.

The decline of food crops has led to price hikes at a rate of 28.4 per cent, she added.

According to the an-nual economic report, the country suffered from in-consistent rains that were insufficient and when it rained, it was heavy, lead-ing to severe erosion and flooding.—MNA/Xinhua

Mozambique to vaccinate 9 million children against measles

MAPUTO, 7 May—About 9 million children under the age of 14 in Mozambique will be vaccinated against measles during a national vaccination cam-paign that will run from 25 July to 10 September, local media reported on Friday.

This campaign will also be used as an opportu-nity for a further round of polio vaccination, and to administer Vitamin A supplements.

The campaign, which mobilizes about 40,000 workers including volun-teers and technical staff, will cost about 10 million US dollars.

Naguib Gulamo, a pediatritian at the Mozambican Health Min-istry, told Press that this is the third campaign against measles in the country, and the ministry is making an all-out effort to eradicate the disease by 2010 or 2015.

He added that Mo-zambique has the highest rate of infection by measles in southern Africa while in most countries in the region, the disease has been eradicated.

The Mozambican Government’s partners in this campaign include the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

MNA/Xinhua

On 24 April, hun-dreds of thousands of Lopez Obrador support-ers took to Mexico City’s streets decrying the case against him as a “political witch hunt.”

Three days later, Fox accepted resigna-tions of Attorney Gen-eral Rafael Macedo de la Concha and a deputy who had been in charge of the case against Lopez Obrador. Just two days after taking office, At-torney General Cabeza de Vaca dropped the case.—MNA/Xinhua

Study shows antioxidant enzyme prolong animal lifespan

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Hydrogen peroxide is a waste product of metabolism and it can be the precursor of free radicals that can damage the cell. The damage can in turn lead to more flaws in the cell’s chemical processes, making a vicious cycle that leads to more free radicals and more cellular damage.

The researchers studied mice with a genetic variation that made them produce more human catalase, the enzyme that breaks down hydrogen peroxide. They targeted the liver of the catalase to different areas of the cell: the cytoplasm, where catalase normally goes to decompose hydrogen peroxide; the nucleus, the DNA containing “control centre” for the cell; and the mitochondria, the cell’s power plant that converts organic matter into energy.

They compared the different groups of mice to a control group and found that increased production of catalase could affect the mouse lifespan. The mice with higher catalase levels in the mitochondria, dubbed the MCAT group, had about a 20-per-cent increase in average and maximum lifespan, or about four and a half months.—MNA/Xinhua
LONDON, 8 May — Relegation candidates scored positive results to move the battle to the final round while newly-crowned Chelsea celebrated their first championship in 50 years with a 1-0 win over Charlton thanks to Claude Makelele’s last-minute controversial penalty kick on Saturday.

The relegation battle will go to the last round of matches after Crystal Palace and Southampton drew 2-2, Norwich City beat Birmingham City 1-0 and West Bromwich Albion earned a surprise 1-1 draw at Manchester United.

Makelele had never scored for the Blues in his two-season career in English football but bundled in the rebound after missing a dubious penalty.

Frank Lampard stumbled outside the penalty box under minimal pressure from Jonathan Fortune to win the spot-kick before the League Cup winners were awarded their second domestic title, 50 years on from their last championship.

Chelsea’s English midfield star Joe Cole, supporting Eidur Gudjohnsen in attack, created the two best chances of the opening exchanges.

His first effort from outside the penalty box 13 minutes in was well held by Andersen but after cutting into the area five minutes later, his curling shot sailed wide.

Blues left-back William Gallas created a good chance for Lampard in the 23rd minute but he headed the France international’s cross just over the bar.

Andersen pulled off an excellent save ten minutes before the interval to keep matters level.

Cole’s curling shot from the top of the penalty box was heading in but Andersen’s diving stop was enough to deflect the ball off the crossbar.

Blues skipper John Terry was next to hit the woodwork, the England centre-half’s header from a Glen Johnson cross striking the bar eight minutes after the break.

Charlton could have taken the lead in the 64th minute when Lisbie played in captain Matt Holland but the midfielder’s strike across goal was well saved by Cudicini. Earlier, there was a flurry of red cards and plenty of thrills in the drop zone, where any one of the bottom four clubs could still survive on a dramatic final afternoon next Sunday.

**Ronaldo scores 100th goal in Spanish soccer**

**Madrid, 8 May — Ronaldo Nazario, the striker of Real Madrid, scored his 100th goal since he first arrived in Spain in the match against Racing Santander through a penalty kick, although he had time to score again in the second half.**

The Brazilian striker is ending the season in perfect conditions. With the two scores he had eight goals in five matches, after a two-month period without a single goal.

Since he arrived in Spain with Barcelona, Ronaldo has scored on 101 occasions in the Spanish League, including 20 this season.

In the match versus Racing, he also gave a pass for the goal of English Michael Owen.

Thus now Ronaldo is exerting pressure on the top scorer of the Spanish League, Barcelona’s Samuel Eto’o.

In the end, with two more goals in the second half by captain Raul, Real Madrid defeated Racing 5-0.

**Benitez denies move to Real Madrid**

**London, 8 May — Liverpool boss Rafa Benitez denied on Saturday the rumours claiming he would be allied to join Real Madrid.**

The Spanish has been linked with Real for some time with the future of Wanderley Luxemburgo still looking uncertain.

Benitez insists he has no plans to quit Liverpool and is only concentrating on helping Liverpool back to the glory days.

“I am not thinking about my future,” said Benitez. “Someone says to me about a long contract. I am very happy now. I don’t have any problems.

“I want to win trophies this season and the next seasons with Liverpool.”

“I was happy with Extramadura where we were promoted and Tenerife, where we were promoted. “At Valladolid I was sacked and I was happy there also.

“Valencia was fantastic the last three years and here it is the same. I enjoy my job.

“I don’t want to think of a new contract. I don’t want to put anyone under pressure. I don’t need to think about it. Jose Mourinho has 10 more years at Chelsea. That’s fine. Good for him. If I have five or 10 years it’s the same,” he said.

**Abramovich vows to make Chelsea biggest**

**London, 8 May — Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich broke self-imposed silence as he pledged his commitment to the club and vowed to make them the biggest in the world.**

The Russian tycoon is savouring the title success and he claims that it is only the start of the glory trail.

“I view this championship as just the beginning of a new era for Chelsea and would like to reiterate my long-term commitment to the club,” Abramovich told the club’s match day programme.

“Much has been said about the financial outlay over the past two years.

“We have made solid investments on the field in players, management, training facilities and an academy that will nurture the next generation of home-grown talent.

“Off the field, a team of executives and senior managers has been put together to grow the business and capitalize on the playing success.

“All of this is a deliberate, long-term strategy with the aim of building the most successful football club in the world in the next 10 years and beyond.

“Under chairman Bruce Buck, chief executive Peter Kenyon and Jose Mourinho, we have a strong leadership team that shares my vision.

“I offer my heartfelt congratulations to the board of directors, Peter Kenyon, Jose Mourinho, John Terry, the staff and, especially, the players on bringing the title to Stamford Bridge.

“Winning the league this year is especially moving as it comes on the 50th anniversary of Chelsea’s last title and at the beginning of the club’s centenary year celebrations.”

**Prague to host European League Final Four next year**

**Prague, 8 May — Prague will host the elite European League Final Four men’s basketball tournament next year in the Sazka Arena.**

**Karel Tejkal said on Saturday.**

The tournament will take place at the end of April. This is the first time that the finals of the top European club basketball competition will take place in the Czech Republic. Czech teams, however, do not participate in the competition, which began in 1988.

“It’s a risky proposition, because the Czech Republic is not a European basketball power and will not have its own club in the Final Four. But this decision is in accordance with our long-term concept,” competition chief Jordi Bertomeu said.

The newly-built Sazka Arena was the deciding factor for Prague, which can house 17,000 fans for basketball, as was the popularity of Prague as a tourist destination.

**Answer for yesterday’s Crossword Puzzle**

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C U M M I N G
A H E A N
S A I N
N A R C O T
S H A R M E D
E G A R E
K R E N T
P E R E V
N O R B O L
A T U L I P
T H Y M E
E C H A N T
I C A T
I T H
S A T I R
E W E E
L A N E
L E V E J
O R R o L
E N T I O N
P E H N
M E R G E
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Liu Xiang wins 110m hurdles final in Osaka

China’s world record holder Liu Xiang (L) leads a pack in the men’s 110m hurdles final at the IAAF Japan Grand Prix in Osaka recently. Liu won the race with a time of 13.12 seconds. — INTERNET

**Prague will host European League Final Four men’s basketball tournament next year in the Sazka Arena. Czech sportovni agency spokesman Karel Tejkal said on Saturday.**

Tejkal said that the contract to host the event was signed by agency head Tomas Petera in Moscow on Saturday.

The tournament will take place at the end of April. This is the first time that the finals of the top European club basketball competition will take place in the Czech Republic. Czech teams, however, do not participate in the competition, which began in 1988.

“It’s a risky proposition, because the Czech Republic is not a European basketball power and will not have its own club in the Final Four. But this decision is in accordance with our long-term concept,” competition chief Jordi Bertomeu said.

The newly-built Sazka Arena was the deciding factor for Prague, which can house 17,000 fans for basketball, as was the popularity of Prague as a tourist destination.

MNA/Xinhua
GCC-China FTA talks on fast track

ABU DHABI, 8 May—The free-trade agreement (FTA) negotiations between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and China are on fast track and expected to be completed before the end of 2006, the Times of Oman daily reported on Saturday.

Abdul Malik Al Hinaia, undersecretary for economic affairs at Oman’s Ministry of National Economy, said a free trade agreement will be signed after the completion of talks. GCC and China had signed a framework agreement on economic, trade, investment, and technological cooperation in July 2004 in Beijing. Al Hinaia said the two sides have made an excellent start, and the negotiations will first focus on goods and then on the services sector, investments and other areas. The two parts are now discussing various methods and means for trade expansion and promotion of trade liberalization, said Al Hinaia.

Liberalization in trade will be visible soon after the agreement comes into force. However, a complete GCC-China free-trade area will become a reality by the end of the tenth year of the agreement.

GCC-China FTA will considerably reduce tariffs, simplify the flow of goods and facilitate mutual investments. It will also lay a solid foundation for bilateral cooperation. Technically, the agreement will give a big boost to mutual cooperation in the field of energy, said the daily, adding China is believed to be the third largest trading partner of the GCC, after the US and Japan.

The GCC has more than 1.5 trillion US dollars overseas investments and has enormous demand for Chinese garments, fabrics, electronic and telecommunication products while the region’s oil, natural gas, petrochemicals and other chemical products will continue to attract Chinese markets — MNA/Xinhua

HK retail sales value up 6.4% in March

HONG KONG, 8 May—The value of Hong Kong’s total retail sales rose 6.4 per cent to 16.5 billion Hong Kong dollars (2.12 billion US dollars) in March compared with the same period of 2004, the Hong Kong Government’s Census & Statistics Department announced on Friday.

According to the department, after netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the overall volume of retail sales increased 5.4 per cent.

Taking the first quarter of 2005 together, retail sales increased by 8.5 per cent in value or 7.7 per cent in volume over the same period a year earlier.

Reflecting the solid revival in consumer demand, the growth in retail sales was rather broad-based in March, marked by double-digit growth in sales of commodities in department stores and in electrical goods and photographic equipment, as well as a further growth in sales of clothing, footwear and other consumer goods.

Sales of motor vehicles and parts fell 18 per cent, though, while sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco slipped 0.9 per cent in volume in March compared with a year earlier.

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the overall volume of retail sales increased 2.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2005 compared with the preceding quarter. The Census & Statistics Department said the overall volume of retail sales continued to record a solid growth in March, on the back of improved labour market conditions and generally positive sentiment.

The strength of local consumer demand was evident not only from the faster year-on-year growth in retail sales for the first quarter as a whole as compared with that for the preceding quarter, but also from the further increase on a seasonally adjusted basis over the fourth quarter, it said. — MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Sunday, 8 May, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:00 hours

MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Rakhine State, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Chin State, lower Sagaing and Magway Divisions, scattered in Mandalay, Bago and Yangon Divisions and widespread in the remaining states and Divisions with locally heavyfalls in Mandalay and Taninthayi Divisions. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Myeik (0.00) inches, Dway (4.29) inches, Tay (2.64) inches and Kawthong (2.01) inches. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Shan and Mon States, upper Sagaing Division (6°) below normal in Yangon Division. (7°C) below normal in Kayah State and Bago Division and normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 7-5-2005 was 84°F. Minimum temperature on 8-5-2005 was 66°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 8-5-2005 was 81%.

Total sunshine hours on 7-5-2005 was nil. Rainfalls on 8-5-2005 were (0.28) inch at Yangon Airport, (0.40) inch at Kaba-Aye and (0.39) inch at central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were 2.25 inches at Yangon Airport, 2.72 inches at Kaba-Aye and 2.26 inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from Northwest at (08:30) hours MST on 8-5-2005.

Bay inference: According to the observations at 09:30 MST today, yesterday’s low pressure area over Southeast Bay has moved eastwards into the North Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay and weather is partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 9-5-2005: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Kachin, Mon and Kayin States and Taninthayi Division, scattered in Shan State, Bago and Yangon Division and isolated in the States and Divisions with isolated heavyfalls in Mon, Kayin State and Taninthayi Division. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Squalls with moderate seas are likely at times and off and along Gulf of mottama. Mon-Taninthayi Coast Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) mph. Sea will be elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Decrease of rain in the lower Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 9-5-2005: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 9-5-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Special Weather News

Issued at 11:00 hrs MST on 8-5-2005

According to the observations at 09:30 hours MST today, yesterday low pressure area over Southeast Bay has moved eastwards into the north Andaman Sea and adjoining Southeast Bay.
YANGON, 8 May — A ceremony to sign production sharing contracts between MOGE and Essar Oil Ltd of India was held at the Sedona Hotel here yesterday evening. Present on the occasion were Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa, Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr R K Bhatia, President of Essar Group Mr S N Ruia, Managing Director Mr A N Sinha, invited guests and departmental personnel.

After Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi had delivered an address on the occasion, Mr A N Sinha and Managing Director U Hsan Lwin expressed thanks.

Next, Minister Brig-Gen Maung Bo, the commander and party inspected 22-mile long road construction project near Kinmon Camp in Kyaikhto Township. After hearing reports presented by officials, Lt-Gen Maung Bo fulfilled the requirements.

Due to combined efforts of Red Cross members and medical staff, success has been achieved in implementing the tasks, particularly in prevention and alleviation of diseases. In implementing the two objectives of the Ministry of Health, members of the Red Cross Society and voluntary participants are joining hands with the medical staff. The Myanmar Red Cross Society, in its drive to alleviate human suffering, is implementing three work programmes — promoting the health, prevention of diseases, and rendering help to those in distress.

Next, Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi handed over notification on work permit of the Ministry of Energy and permit of Myanmar Investment Commission to Mr S N Sinha. After Minister Brig-Gen Lun Thi had delivered an address on the occasion, Mr A N Sinha and Managing Director of MOGE U Hsan Lwin expressed thanks.

Managing Director U Hsan Lwin and Mr A N Sinha signed the contracts and exchanged documents.

Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi speaking at ceremony to sign production sharing contracts between MOGE and Essar Oil Ltd of India. — ENERGY

YANGON, 8 May — The World Red Cross Day 2005 was observed at the meeting hall of Institute of Nursing (Yangon) on Bogyoke Aung San Street, here this morning.

Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint delivered an address, saying that as a gesture of honouring Henry Dunant, who initiated Red Cross humanitarian activities, his birth day was designated as World Red Cross Day. It is also the day, on which the volunteers all over the world are honoured for their noble minds and services.

Now the Red Cross is carrying out the tasks for promotion of the health of the people, and prevention and alleviation of diseases.

Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint addresses ceremony to mark World Red Cross Day. — MNA

(See page 11)