YANGON, 22 May — To hail the success of gold plate and Shwethaging offering ceremony for the Shwedagon Pagoda, a consecration and merit-sharing ceremony took place in the pagoda precinct this morning.

First, ‘soon’, flowers and water were offered to the Padamya Myatshin Buddha Image. Present on the occasion were Chairman of the Leading Committee for All-round Renovation of the Shwedagon Pagoda Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung and committee members, Chairman of the work committee Maj-Gen Hsan Hsint of the Ministry of Defence, senior military officers, members of the pagoda board of trustees and wellwishers.

Next, wellwishers offered ‘soon’, fruits, flowers, water and light to the Buddha images kept at the pagoda. Then followed the consecration and merit-sharing ceremony. It was graced by State Ovadaçariya Sayadaws and members of the Sangha totaling 108. It was also attended by Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and officials.

The Sayadaws and members of the Sangha then consecrated the Shwedagon Pagoda and shared the merits gained. State Ovadaçariya Pali Tekkatho Nyaungdon Monastery Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rathaguru Bhaddanta Sobhana administered the Nine Precepts to the congregation, and members of the Sangha recited parittas.

Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung supplied on religious matters. He said the Shwedagon Pagoda is the most glorious one of the Union of Myanmar. It is the historic pagoda to which Buddhist nationals from all corners of the country pay pilgrimage visits. That is why gold and Shwethaking have always been offered to the pagoda since the time of ancient Myanmar kings to enable it to become sublime and glorious.

Similarly, under the aegis of the State it has been nearly six years since the Shwehtidaw, bronze plates and Shwethaking were offered to the pagoda in 1999.

The minister said the offering of gold and Shwethakings started on 1 January this year. To offer the Shwehtidaw, cash donations of over K 420 million were made from July to December 2004 and K 1,200 million from January to May 2005. (See page 8)

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INSIDE

Now, the 10-year clean water supply project has entered the fifth year. It has covered 7,157 out of 8,042 villages, and it accounts for 89 per cent. So far, clean water has been supplied to 14,309 out of 23,225 villages across the nation. So, it accounts for 62 per cent.

(M Page 7) MAUNG BA PE (OKTHA)
People’s Desire

* Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
* Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
* Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
* Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

Billboard hailing MWVO conference erected in Shan State (East)

YANGON, 22 May — A ceremony to erect the billboard hailing Myanmar War Veterans Organization Conference 2005 in Kengtung. — MNA

Deputy Transport Minister arrives back

YANGON, 22 May — A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Transport Col Nyan Tun Aung arrived here yesterday evening after attending the 19th ASEAN Transport Senior Officials Meeting held in Vientiane in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on 19 and 20 May.

They were welcomed back at the airport by Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Deputy Minister U Pe Than, departmental heads and their families.

A total of 57 members including 52 transport senior officials from ASEAN-member nations and the five officials from ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Office in Japan attended the meeting.

At the meeting, matters related to the designating of transnational routes in the ASEAN region, Air Travel sector, reports on water, air and land transport sector, safety in transportation, the cooperation in the measures and the transport cooperation between ASEAN and Japan, China and India, were discussed and mutual agreements were signed.

Director-General U Hla Thaung Myint of Road Transport under the Ministry of Rail Transportation, Superintending Engineer U Khin Maung Than of the Public Works who attended the meeting together with the deputy transport minister, also arrived back on the same flight.

MNA

Respect paying ceremony held

YANGON, 22 May — The old students of the University of Computer Studies (Yangon) held a ceremony to pay respects to the teachers at Universities’ Dhammayon, Kamayut Township this morning.

After paying respects, the students presented souvenirs to their teachers. Next, the rector of the university (Retd) Dr Kyaw Thein on behalf of the teachers gave advice to them. One of the old students, Aye Tun Lin spoke of holding the respect paying ceremony and of Pahtan books donation worth K 120,000 towards Insein Ywama Pariyatti Sarthintaik.

MNA

Lectures on national policy and State’s seven-point road map

YANGON, 22 May — USDA CEC Member Deputy Minister for Information U Thein Sein gave a lecture on the successful implementation of the national policy and the State’s seven-point road map to over 100 trainees of the organizing course conducted by Pabedan Township USDA opened at BEHS No1 in Pabedan Township this morning. — MNA

MNA

Indian information delegation arrives

YANGON, 22 May — Under the bilateral cooperation programme on information between ASEAN and India, the India information delegation led by Director (News) Smt. Arvind M. Singh of Doordarshan News Agency of India arrived here by air this morning. They were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by departmental officials of Myanmar Radio and Television. — MNA

Stamp out machinations of destructive elements

The State Peace and Development Council, taking lesson from the experiences in the history, is striving its utmost for stability of the State, further cementing national solidarity and narrowing the development gap among national races after laying down the national policy— non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty.

Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein on 21 May attended the opening of Thanlwin Bridge (Tapar) on Kaktai-Tarmsone-Mongsit-Tarshtwetan Road in Kaktai Township, Muse District, Shan State (North) and made a speech on the occasion.

He underscored the need for the entire national people with Union Spirit to make concerted efforts to bring about equitable development at the length and breadth of the nation, to realize the national policy and the State’s seven-point road map.

He ensured perpetuation of the Union, and to further strengthen national solidarity, making best use of development infrastructures already in place.

Nowadays, unprecedented progress has been made in various sectors of the Union including Shan State thanks to integrated and well-coordinated efforts of the government, the people and the Tatmadaw.

To achieve similar progress, the government together with the people had to stand up, discard and dissention sown by colonialists.

Still, the government is making all-out efforts to put an end to drug menace, evil legacy of colonialists, and development gap among national races in Shan State.

At such a time, neo-colonialists in collusion with internal and external destructive elements are making accusations and conspiracies to stake hold and disintegration among national races and to cause disintegration of the Union.

It is incumbent upon the entire national people including those in Shan State based on Union Spirit to make concerted efforts to bring about equitable development in various sectors of the Union in accordance with the four-point people’s desire in national people to make concerted efforts in warding off a series of conspiracies of internal and external destructive elements.

PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 23 May, 2005

Stamp out machinations of destructive elements

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ASEAN Senior Officials consultation kicks off in Vientiane

BEIJING, 21 May — The 12th ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations) Senior Officials Consultation Meeting kicked off on Friday in the Laotian capital of Vientiane, focusing on the regional and world security.

Shen Guofang, China’s Assistant Foreign Minister, attended the consultation, together with other 23 senior officials or representatives from the 10-member ASEAN and neighbouring countries.

The participants held that the stability in the Asia-Pacific Region was still threatened by terrorism, cross-border crimes and other crises, noting that all countries in the region should further cooperate to safeguard regional peace and stability.

Shen explained China’s viewpoints on the regional situation, adding China, as a member of Asia, will further coordinate and cooperate with other members.

China will make concrete efforts to promote stability and prosperity in the region, the Chinese diplomat said at the consultation.

China will also cooperate with other countries to combat non-conventional threats, he added.

The consultation was launched in 1994 as the biggest annual political consultation in the Asia-Pacific Region.

On Thursday’s consultation of 10+3, namely, ASEAN countries plus China, Japan and South Korea, Shen said China supports the ASEAN to continue its leading role in the integration process of East Asia. As to the 9th East Asia Summit, which is slated to open in Kuala Lumpur in December, Shen said China fully respects ASEAN common understanding and the summit should help enhance common development and solidarity in East Asia.

Japan, Indonesia to work out measures to facilitate investment

Tokyo, 21 May — Japan and Indonesia agreed Friday to work out measures to facilitate Japanese investment in Indonesia after they conclude a bilateral free trade agreement.

Japanese Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Shioichi Nakagawa and visiting Indonesian Coordinating Minister for the Economy Aburizal Bakrie confirmed the need to map out ways to improve the investment climate in Indonesia after the two countries sign an FTA.

“We’d like to open up to everybody and we also expect Japan to open up to Indonesian products, especially agricultural products which are complementary to agricultural products in Japan,” Bakrie told reporters at a press conference.

If Indonesia concludes an FTA with Japan, it will be Indonesia’s first such agreement. Jakarta expects expanded investment from Japan as the biggest benefit of an FTA, he said, adding that Japan aims to seal an FTA with Indonesia within two years.

Indonesia to develop nuclear power plant by 2017

Jakarta, 21 May — Indonesian State Minister for Research and Technology Kusmayanto Kadiman said Friday the government would develop nuclear technology by 2017 for various peaceful purposes, including power generation.

“The energy policy strategy is focused on the plan to develop a nuclear power plant by 2017,” Kusmayanto was quoted by the official Antara news agency as saying.

The plan, which did not specify a possible location for the plant, required a more detailed assessment, the minister said after opening a maritime industry exhibition in the East Java capital of Surabaya.

When asked about the dangers of nuclear power, the official said any technology could pose dangers, which was why serious study and preparation were required.

“Even coal-fired power plants have the potential to explode,” he said.

“About the location, the possibilities include Madura (East Java) or Muria (Central Java), but if these proposals are turned down it will be no problem to move to earthquake-free Kalimantan,” he said.

Kusmayanto said preparations so far were limited to studies involving universities, research and development agencies, the National Development Planning Board and related agencies.

Indonesia, Malaysia to resume talks on water dispute

Jakarta, 21 May — Indonesia and Malaysia will meet in Kuala Lumpur between 25 and 26 May to discuss water dispute off the Sulawesi Sea and other marine border issues, an Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman said here Friday.

“The governments of Indonesia and Malaysia will hold the second meeting about the sea boundaries in Kuala Lumpur,” said spokesman Juy Thamrin.

During the meeting, Indonesia will base its arguments on the international law as well as Malaysia’s acknowledgement of its territorial rights, he said.

Both sides will also discuss border issues concerning the Strait of Malacca, Singapore and the South China Sea, he added.

The meeting is a follow-up of the agreement reached by both sides earlier in Bali. Both sides then agreed to settle their water dispute through diplomatic channel.

Tensions rose between the two countries since Malaysia’s state-owned oil company Petronas on 16 February granted energy giant Shell a concession in the Ambalat Block, also named as Block XYZ by Malaysia.

Japan and Indonesia agreed that Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will agree on the start of official FTA talks during Yudhoyono’s planned visit to Japan starting at the end of May, Bakrie said.

If Indonesia concludes an FTA with Japan, it will be Indonesia’s first such agreement. Jakarta expects expanded investment from Japan as the biggest benefit of an FTA, he said, adding that Japan aims to seal an FTA with Indonesia within two years.

Air India flight makes emergency landing at Mumbai airport

Mumbai, 21 May — A Paris-bound Air India flight with 428 passengers onboard made an emergency landing on Friday after it took off from the International Airport here following a technical snag, officials said.

The Mumbai-Paris-Newark flight took off from the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport here at 9 am but had to be recalled after a hydraulic leak was detected, an Air India spokesman told PTI.

The aircraft, with 428 passengers onboard, made a safe landing at the airport around 11.30 am.

The aircraft had to dump fuel before the emergency landing, which is the usual procedure in such cases, he said.

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US Army report details brutal death of Afghan detainees


The nearly 2,000-page confidential file, a copy of which was obtained by the newspaper, depicted young, poorly trained US soldiers in repeated incidents of abuse at the Bagram Collection Point, a detention facility some 70 kilometres north of the Afghan capital, Kabul.

The harsh treatment, which has resulted in criminal charges against seven soldiers, went well beyond the two deaths of Dilawar and Habibullah, the two detainees, in December 2002.

Even when Dilawar, a 22-year-old taxi driver, was dying, his American jailers continued to torment him, the Times reported.

Dilawar was hauled from his cell at the detention centre in Bagram around 2 am to answer questions about a rocket attack on an American base. When he arrived at the interrogation room, an interpreter who was present said, his legs were bouncing uncontrollably in the plastic chair and his hands were numb. He had been chained by the wrists to the top of his cell for much of the previous four days.

At the interrogators’ behest, a guard tried to force Dilawar to his knees, but his legs, which had been pummelled by guards for several days, could no longer bend. An interrogator told Dilawar that he could see a doctor after they finished with him, but the guards were instructed only to chain the prisoner back to the ceiling when he was finally sent back to his cell.

Several hours passed before an emergency room doctor finally saw Dilawar, who was already dead by then. Army investigators later learned that most of the interrogators had believed Dilawar was an innocent man who simply drove his taxi past the American base at the wrong time, The New York Times reported.

In some instances, the harsh treatment was directed or carried out by interrogators to extract information, and in others, it was punishment meted out by military police guards, testimony showed. Sometimes, the torment seemed to have been driven by little more than boredom or cruelty, or both, according to report.

Last October, the Army’s Criminal Investigation Command concluded that there was probable cause to charge 27 officers and enlisted personnel with criminal offences in the Dilawar case ranging from dereliction of duty to maiming and involuntary manslaughter.

Fifteen of the same soldiers were also cited for probable criminal responsibility in the Habibullah case.

MNA/Xinhua

Violence in Iraq cripples $21 billion rebuilding effort

BAGHDAD, 21 May — Washington is far behind in plans to pump $21 billion into Iraq’s reconstruction, bogged down by guerrilla attacks that have killed hundreds of contractors and diverted funds to security, a US official said Saturday.

“There is a long way to go. We recognize a lot of work needs to be done,” said William Taylor, the US official overseeing American rebuilding work in Iraq.

He told reporters it was still too early to predict when Iraqis will enjoy adequate electricity and other essential services — more than two years after the US-led invasion.

Relentless guerrilla attacks have killed 295 contractors for US projects alone since reconstruction began, said Theresa Shope, spokeswoman for the Iraq Reconstruction Management Office.

Violence has forced foreign governments and companies to pump money into security, draining budgets and delaying rebuilding ventures after years of wars, United Nations trade sanctions and a state stranglehold on the economy.

Boosting the national electricity grid would help raise the spirits of Iraqis who have spent three straight summers battling stifling heat with erratic power for air conditioners.

But bloodshed has put a US plan to improve the electricity grid on hold, Taylor said.

The chaos has worsened since a new government promising stability was announced last month. Guerrillas have killed more than 500 people with suicide bombings and other attacks, raising fears that the violence will erupt into a sectarian civil war.—Internet

SingTel pumps in $252m in Bharti, puts off ADR issue

NEW DELHI, 21 May — Singapore Telecom (SingTel) has increased its stake in Indian telecom major Bharti Tele-Ventures, offering mobile services under AirTel brand, to 30.84 per cent by infusing 252 million US dollars.

SingTel’s stake has gone by buying shares worth 252 million US dollars in the unlisted Bharti Telecom which is the parent company of Bharati Tele-Ventures.

Meanwhile, the company has decided not to proceed with the proposed secondary overseas issue of up to 200 million equity shares due to lack of interest by shareholders.

“Bharti Tele-Ventures Limited (BTVL) had in July 2004 announced its intention to proceed with a sponsored American Depository Receipt (ADR) secondary offering of up to 200 million equity shares. The board of directors of BTVL has decided not to proceed with the proposed ADR due to lack of sponsorship interest by most of its principal shareholders,” the company said in a statement. “SingTel’s increase in stake is an expression of confidence in India, a growth story of Indian telecom and in BTVL — its performance, management team and its role in shaping the Indian telecom industry,” a Bharti spokesperson said. — MNA/PTI

Conjoined twin sisters successfully separated in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 22 May — A separation surgery on a pair of twin girls from Indonesia, who were joined at the abdomen and hip bone, completed successfully at Singapore’s Gleneagles Hospital on Saturday evening.

It took 15 doctors more than 10 hours to separate the 15-month-old girls and rebuild their lower bodies. The operation began at eight o'clock (local time) in the morning. Doctors announced the success at a Press briefing held at the hospital after the completion of the surgery, saying that the girls are taken care of in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) since they are still in a dangerous situation.

What surprised them most was that separate set of organs, such as vagina and ovary, except anus were found when the twins were separated, which was different from what they had expected, doctors said. Each of the sisters got a leg as scheduled.

The parents of the twins told Xinhua that they are happy that the sisters can finally sleep in two separate beds and live independently. That is what they have dreamt of for more than one year since their daughters were born.

The family arrived in Singapore in February this year for test and evaluation of the sisters, and will leave the city state in three to five weeks, according to the parents. This is the fourth separation surgery conducted in the island state.

Doctors successfully separated a pair of 11-month-old girls from Nepal, who were fused at the head, in a marathon operation lasting four days in April 2001.

MNA/Xinhua

A fisherman checks out a fish pen on Manila Bay on 20 May, 2005. Fish farming activity at Laguna de Bay, one of southeast Asia’s largest lakes, is to be curtailed to save the waters from worsening pollution, the environment department said.—INTERNET

Subari (L) and Neng Harmaini, parents of 15-month-old Indonesian conjoined twins, stand beside their daughter Anjeli as she rests on her bed after undergoing a 10 hour operation at Gleneagles Hospital in Singapore on 21 May, 2005.—INTERNET

Indonesia, who were joined at the abdomen and hip bone, completed successfully at Singapore’s Gleneagles Hospital on Saturday evening.
India’s leather export target set at $4b 2010

NEW DELHI, 21 May — Growing at an annual 13-per-cent rate, the Indian leather industry aims at doubling its exports earnings to four billion US dollars by 2010.

“We have set an export target of four billion dollars in next five years,” Vice-President of the Council for Leather Exports Sanjay Leekha told PTI here. At present, the Indian leather industry is valued at four billion dollars inclusive of the two-billion-dollar earnings from exports.

India accounts for a share of 2.32 per cent in the global leather trade, Leekha said, adding that the country has a huge potential in leather exports due to the abundance of raw materials as the country is the leader in cattle population in the world.

Today, Indian leather industry ranks eighth in the export trade of foreign exchange earnings of the country.

The value-added finished leather products constitute 80 per cent of the total export from the industry, which was a mere seven per cent in 1956-57.

Germany, Italy, USA, Britain, Hong Kong and Spain are the top export destinations for Indian leather and leather products.

The world trade in leather products is growing in view of the increasing demand for products made of leather, Leekha said. “Italian and German shoe manufacturers are increasingly looking at India as their outsourcing hub,” he said, adding that a number of leading global shoe brands outsource from India. He said the domestic demand is also expected to pick up with growing GDP, and consumption pattern particularly for products like footwear and leather goods.

India faces stiff competition from countries like China, Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia in the international market as they have already emerged as major manufacturers of leather products.

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The most dangerous civilian job in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 21 May — It’s one of the most dangerous civilian jobs in one of the world’s most dangerous countries: translating Arabic for the US military in Iraq.

One by one, little noticed in the daily mayhem, dozens of interpreters have been killed — mostly Iraqis but 12 Americans, too. They account for 40 per cent of the 300-plus death claims filed by private contractors with the US Labor Department.

Riding in bomb-blasted Humvees, tagging along on foot patrols in Fallujah or dashing into buildings behind Marines, translators are dying on the job, but also facing danger at home: hunted by guerrillas who call them pro-American collaborators.

“If the guerrillas catch us, they will cut off our heads because the imams say we are spies,” said Mustafa Fahmi, 24, an Iraqi interpreter with Titan Corp, the biggest employer of linguists in Iraq. “I’ve been threatened like fifteen times, but I won’t quit. A neighbour saw me driving and said, ‘I am going to kill you.’”

That fate befell Luqman Mohammed Kardi Hussein, a Titan linguist and Iraqi Kurd captured by guerrillas in October. A video of the 41-year-old’s beheading was posted on the Internet.

Another Titan employee, Sudanese interpreter Noureddin Zakaria, was luckier. He appeared as a hostage on an 30 Oct broadcast by Al-Arabiya television, saying he had been captured in Ramadi. His kidnappers later released him.

In a more recent attack in Baghdad in late March, two carloads of guerrillas gunned down five Iraqi women traveling home in a car from their jobs on a US base. All were killed, the Iraqi police reported, and at least one of them was a translator.

The efficiency with which guerrillas hunted down Titan contractors worries the US military. As militants killed them in growing numbers, usually in ambushes off base, the Army and others began hiring Titan workers on military bases or in Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone.

“There was a period when it seemed translators were being targeted on a daily basis,” said First Sgt Stephen Valley, a US Army reservist who worked with Arab journalists in Baghdad. “There was virtually no way to protect these people.”

African countries agree on fresh crackdown on illicit arms

NAIROBI, 21 May — Arms experts meeting in Nairobi have vowed to crack down on all forms of illegal arms trafficking and announced plans to destroy huge volumes of arms caught seized in operations in Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda and Sudan.

Speaking during the closing session of an African Governmental Experts Meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nairobi Friday, Kenya’s Senior Deputy of Police David Kimayo said the authorities were working jointly with Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda to ensure complete and holistic implementation of anti-arms trafficking through strict cross-border policing.

Kamuyo said the Kenyan Government is keen on helping war-torn nations which edging closer to peace to collect arms and destroy them. African countries have stepped up pressure against the spread of the illicit arms with the setting of the Nairobi Small Arms Secretariat, an institution set up by foreign ministers drawn from 11 East African countries to speed up the fight against the arms menace.

India to give $15m aid to Palestine

NEW DELHI, 21 May — India announced Friday an aid worth of 15 million US dollars to the Palestine National Authority (PNA) for developmental projects, including construction of schools and hospitals.

“During his meeting with PNA President Mahmoud Abbas Thursday evening, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh conveyed that we would continue to support Palestine and do whatever we could in our own way to help the Palestinian people and the Palestinian state,” said Rajiv Sikri, secretary in the External Affairs Ministry. “India’s commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people has been expressed not only in words and moral and diplomatic support in the UN,” Sikri told reporters. He placed the official visit of Abbas in the broader perspective of India’s relations with the Arab world.

Seoul National University professor Hwang Woo-suk abstracts an ovum from a cow’s ovarium at his laboratory in Seoul recently.

INTERNET
Overseas sales of Huawei Technologies to record $5b in 2005

SHENZHEN, 21 May — China’s largest telecom equipment provider, Huawei Technologies, said Thursday that the company’s overseas sales will reach five billion US dollars in 2005.

This would be the first time that Huawei’s overseas sales will surpass domestic sales, said Fu Jun, spokesman with the company. Total sales will likely to reach 8.5 billion US dollars in 2005.

As one of the most successful telecom equipment suppliers in the world, Huawei reported annual sales revenue of 5.58 billion US dollars in 2004. This is with a sharp rise of 45 per cent year-on-year, 2.28 billion US dollars or 41 per cent of which came from overseas markets.

Earlier, the company had set its goal of overseas sales for this year at four billion US dollars.

“The good sales record in the first quarter this year, however, have made us more optimistic,” said Fu. Huawei has been a global company for many years and has sold its products to more than 90 countries and established cooperative relationships with more than 400 telecom operators.

Huawei Technologies is one of China’s earliest investors in the third-generation mobile communication technology (3G).

Though the 3G market has not been launched in China, the company has applied its 3G technologies to many countries to build 3G network. Customer countries include Malaysia, the Netherlands, United Arab Emirates and Thailand.

The company has started to sell its 3G terminals recently in Singapore, said Fu. More than 10 per cent of the company’s total sales is spent on research and development, and it has set up research centres in the United States, Sweden, India and Russia.

About 3 per cent of Huawei’s sales revenue is used to improve its corporate management, said Fu. More than 10 per cent of the company’s total sales is spent on research and development, and it has set up research centres in the United States, Sweden, India and Russia.

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Japan calls on Iran to reach accord with Europe in nuke talks

TOKYO, 21 May—Japan called on Iran on Thursday to reach an agreement with European countries in negotiations over its nuclear programmes during a series of talks in Tokyo among top officials, Kyodo News reported.

Japanese Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura urged Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh to “patiently” continue the talks with Britain, France and Germany toward an agreement, Kyodo said.

Aminzadeh, who is in Japan for regular vice-ministerial talks with Japan, was quoted as saying Iran hopes it can reach a conclusion with the three European countries so that both sides would be “winners”.

Iran and the three countries have been discussing since December how to reward Teheran for suspending its all nuclear enrichment programmes.

Iran agreed to the suspension the previous month.

But the talks have become bogged down as Iran has recently expressed a desire to resume part of its uranium enrichment programmes for peaceful purposes.

Aminzadeh also met with Japanese Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka, who expressed concern about Iran’s move toward possible resumption of the uranium programmes.

Aminzadeh signalled that it would be difficult for Iran to immediately accept the European demand as it calls for a complete dismantling of the uranium programmes including peaceful ones, according to Kyodo.

Tanaka expressed hope that foreign ministerial talks among Iran and the three European countries planned for next week will lead to progress over the issue, the news agency said.

S Korea’s economic growth slows in first quarter

SEOUL, 21 May—South Korea’s economy grew in the first quarter at the slowest pace in almost two years due to still weak private spending amid slowing exports, the country’s news agency Yonhap quoted a statement from the Bank of Korea as reporting Friday.

The nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) or total output of goods and services in a nation, increased 2.7 per cent in the first three months of the year from a year earlier, the slowest growth rate since the third quarter of 2003.

Asia’s third-largest economy grew 0.4 per cent in December-January-March period from the previous three months, when seasonal factors are taken into account, according to the central bank.

The bank’s data showed that growth fell short of estimates by domestic and foreign financial institutions, which predicted Asia’s third-largest economy gained 3.41 per cent in the first quarter. The GDP grew 5.5 per cent in the second quarter last year and 4.7 per cent and 3.3 per cent in the third and fourth quarters in 2004, respectively.

The central bank said growth fell sharply due to the extended New Year’s holidays in January and February that reduced the number of working days.

Nepal to provide free interest loan for foreign employment

KATHMANDU, 21 May — The Nepali banks have come up to collectively help the rural poor who are willing to go for foreign employment by providing interest free loan, a banker said here on Friday.

“The banks will provide up to 50 million Nepali rupees (714,000 US dollars) of loan in total for the current fiscal year (16 July, 2004-15 July, 2005),” Basudev Ram Joshi, president of Nepal Bankers’ Association, a non-governmental organization, told reporters.

The bankers took the decision a few days ago following the request by the government of Nepal Rastra Bank, the central bank of Nepal, he revealed.

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Now, the 10-year clean water supply project has entered the fifth year. It has covered 7,157 out of 8,042 villages, and it accounts for 89 per cent. So far, clean water has been supplied to 14,309 out of 23,225 villages across the nation, accounting for 62 per cent.

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

Nigeria enhances joint border patrol

LAGOS, 22 May — Two hundred officers and men singled out from Nigeria’s police, Customs and immigration services are to participate in the enhanced joint border patrol operations started this week.

Emmanuel Ighodalo, a spokesman for the Nigerian Police Force, told a news conference Friday in the Nigerian commercial capital Lagos that the border patrol team was set up following a directive from the Nigerian Presidency.

The team would cover Seme and Idu-Iroko borders on the southwest flank and Jiba-Katsina in the northeast, he said.

Ighodalo said each patrol unit was expected to be headed by a deputy superintendent selected from the services.

Similarly, 18 new patrol vehicles, fitted with communication gadgets, had been provided to fit up to the team which “is also expected to augment the efforts of the patrol teams,” he said. Ighodalo explained that the operation was to curb criminal activities, such as human trafficking, smuggling and similar offences, adding that the arrangement would also foster better working relationships among the services.

“We want to see ourselves as outfits meant to serve the country and Nigerians,” he said, “and in doing this, we want to forge good collaborative efforts in giving quality service as individual services and collectively as a joint force.”

According to Ighodalo, the operation had been launched on May 20 at the Seme and Idu-Iroko borders in Lagos and Ogun states respectively, while that of Jiba-Katsina would take place on 26 May.

Armed robbers raided bank, killing 4 in southern Nigeria

LAGOS, 22 May — At least four persons, including two mobile policemen, have been feared killed in Port Harcourt, capital of Nigeria’s southern state of Rivers when armed robbers raided a new generation bank, local news paper This Day reported on Friday.

The bank robbery also left many other people seriously injured when the heavily-armed robbers numbering about five started shooting indiscriminately in order to gain entrance into the bank, said an eyewitness who refused to be identified.

According to the eyewitness, the armed robbers arrived at the bank at about 12 a.m. (1130 GMT) on Thursday in a minibus and held the environment hostage while they shouted uninterruptedly for about thirty minutes.

Senior UN official to visit Cyprus to explore reviving talks

NICOSIA, 22 May — UN Under Secretary-General for Political Affairs Kieran Prendergast will visit Cyprus on May 30 to explore prospects for a new round of international effort to reunite the island.

During his four-day visit to Cyprus, Prendergast will meet with Greek Cypriot President Tassos Papadopoulos and Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat and other political leaders on both sides to listen to the views of all parties on reviving reunification talks, the semi-official Cyprus News Agency reported from the UN Headquarters in New York.— MNA/Xinhua
Shwehtidaw hoisted atop Muniramarune MyoU Pawdawmu Shwezedidaw in Maubin

YANGON, 22 May — Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo and Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt on 22 May attended the ceremony to hoist Shwehtidaw atop Muniramarune MyoU Pawdawmu Shwezedidaw in Maubin, Ayeyawady Division.

The commander, the ministers and wellwishers offered Shwekyathingan, emerald bowl and fruits to Buddha images in the cave of the pagoda.

Member of State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Dhaja Wakema Sayadaw Bhaddanta Pandavamsa invested the congregation with the Nine Precepts, and the commander and officials presented religious objects and offertories to members of the Sangha.

Secretary Sayadaw Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Nyaunagdon Ponnamayama Zaykyuang Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Osadhabhivamsa delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merit gained.

After that, wellwishers led by the commander and the ministers enshrined the Buddha images. Afterwards, the commander, the ministers and wellwishers hoisted Hidaw, Hngetmyatnadaw and Senbidaw atop the pagoda. Members of the Sangha consecrated the Buddha image. The ceremony ended with the recitation of Buddha Sasanasan Ciram Thittha.

Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung donates offertories to a sayadaw.—MNA

Shwedagon Pagoda ...

(From page 1)

... Then, the ceremony ended with the three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanasan Ciram Thittha.

...—MNA

4th ceremony of pouring water to Bo Tree held

YANGON, 22 May — The 4th ceremony to pour water to the Bo Tree in the precinct of Lawka Chantha Abhaya Labha Muni Buddha Image being poured with water.—MNA

First, the ceremony was opened with three-time recitation of Namo Tassa.

The deputy minister and party then poured water to the Bo Tree. The Wut associations recited the religious verses.

MNA

Bo tree at Lawka Chantha Abhaya Labha Muni Buddha Image being poured with water.—MNA

Fullmoon Day of Kason (Buddha Day) ...

The congregation took the Five Precepts from Theindawgyi Pariyatti Monastery Sayadaw Members of the Sangha recited Parittas. Officials and wellwishers offered alms to members of the Sangha. Later, the Sayadaw delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits. In the afternoon, wut associations recited religious verses. In the evening, officials made arrangements for pouring water to Bo tree for public and devotees. At Botataung Kyakkaikyar Pagoda, Fullmoon Day of Kason (Buddha Day) was observed at NanU Prayer Hall. Commander of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command Headquarters Captain Aye Pe and officials attended the ceremony. After the ceremony, they poured water to the Bo tree.

The 13th ceremony to pour water to Bo tree was held at Pitakat Taik of Foreign Missionary Division on Kaba Aye Hill. Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Dawei Sayadaw Bhaddanta Arjinnabhivamsa administered the Nine Precepts to the congregation. Next, Sayadaws consecrated the Bo sapling to be planted at the precinct of Nayagon Pagoda in Pale Myothit of Mingaladon Township.

Joint Secretary of SSMHC Dwipitakadhara Dwipitaka Kovidna Kalewa Sayadaw Bhaddanta Jagarabhitivasams delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits. Later, the congregation and Sayadaws poured water at the Bo tree.

Similar ceremonies were held at Mogauang Pagoda, Kyawkasan Pagoda, Ngadatgyi, Chaikhteikyi, Koedatgyi and Mailamu Pagodas. On the occasions, the congregations took the precepts from members of the Sangha. Wut associations recited religious verses and then poured water to Bo trees. — MNA

MNA

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Monday, 23 May, 2005
YANGONITES MARK BUDDHA DAY

Buddhists pour water to a Bo tree at Shwephonepwint Pagoda. — MNA

Buddhists pour water to a Bo tree at Sule Pagoda. — MNA

Buddhists pour water to a Bo tree at Botataung Pagoda. — MNA

Buddhists pour water to a Bo tree at Kyaikwaing Pagoda. — MNA

Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko pour water to a Bo tree on Kaba Aye Hills. — MNA

Buddhists pour water to a Bo tree at Shwedagon pagoda. — MNA

Members of religious organizations pour water to a Bo tree at Thiri Mingala Kaba Aye Pagoda. — MNA

Fullmoon Day of Kason in action at Kaba Aye Hills. — MNA
North-West Command Commander inspects agricultural tasks in Dabayin, YeU

YANGON, 22 May — Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye together with departmental officials inspected progress in cultivating summer paddy in Dabayin Township on 16 May morning and fulfilled the requirements. The commander and party proceeded to YeU Township and also looked into the progress of cultivating summer paddy.

Afterwards, the commander and party oversaw digging of Taingchaung drain section 2 in Shwebo Township. The canal is 25,000 feet long and 20 feet deep. On completion, it prevents from floods of 500 acres of farmland.

The commander arrived at the Institute of Agriculture under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Nyaungbintha village, Shwebo Township, and he heard reports on the history of the Institute and its academic matters by the principal, and the commander fulfilled the requirements.

The commander and party proceeded to Zigonlay multi-purpose farm of North-West Command. In-charge of the farm reported on the tasks of breeding fish and pig to the commander and the commander gave necessary instructions.

MNA

Prize-presentation ceremony of Ayeyawady Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee held

YANGON, 22 May — The annual meeting and prize-presentation ceremony of Ayeyawady Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee was held in conjunction with a cash donation ceremony at Ayeyawady Hall in Pathin on 19 May.

It was attended by Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Chairman South-West Command Commander Maj-Gen Soe Naing and wife Daw Tin Tin Lat, chairperson of the committee, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Tin Swe and officials and members of social organizations.

The commander delivered a speech and Daw Tin Tin Lat explained functions of the association for the sectors of health, social and education.

Next, they presented awards to outstanding townships associations.

At the cash donation ceremony, well-wishers presented K 7.7 million. Daw Tin Tin Lat presented K 2.6 million for the township associations and Head of Division Health Department Dr Than Aung K 208000 for health care of the elderly persons in the townships.

Daw Tin Tin Lat also presented K 300,000 for the funds towards the division hospital.

MNA

Yangon Mayor and party view distribution of water producing from an 8-inch-diameter tubewell. — MNA
India says decision on expanding UNSC cannot be unanimous

WASHINGTON, 22 May — A decision on expanding the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) cannot be a unanimous one because in that case no result would emerge.

“The decision on expansion cannot be unanimous because in that case no outcome would emerge on any issue,” said Indian Prime Minister Shyam Saran.

Saran, who met American officials in the context of forthcoming visits to Washington by India’s Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, had said “India would be quite satisfied with decisions by two-thirds majority at the UN.”

He said that India did not have a “unifocal approach, looking solely at permanent membership.” “We are looking at this in the broader context of reform of the UN,” Saran said.

The Foreign Secretary said he discussed the whole gamut of UN reform with American officials.

“We are looking at a fairly broad range of reforms. We have had an initial exchange of views (with the US) on some of these issues.”

Making a strong case for India’s membership to the Council, Saran pointed out that the country has a longstanding record at the UN in terms of peacekeeping and a very dynamic economy.

“We believe we can bring our capabilities to bear in terms of the role the UN can play,” he said.

The Foreign Secretary said the US had not really given out what its own view was with regard to the Security Council, adding “Its main concern has been to make the UN much more effective.”

US firm to pay $4.8m in fine for bribing Chinese employees

LOS ANGELES, 22 May — US officials on Friday fined a Los Angeles company $4.8 million US dollars in settling allegations that the firm bribed Chinese employees.

In agreements reached with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the US Department of Justice, Diagnostic Products Corp. has agreed to make total payments of approximately $4.8 million to doctors and employees of Chinese hospitals.

In addition to paying the fine, DePuy has agreed to the approval of the federal court to which the matter will be assigned.

Finland accuses Russia of violating airspace

HELSINKI, 22 May — Finland on Friday accused Russia of repeatedly violating the Finnish airspace, with no result emerging. Russian planes’ infringement was not regarded as a deliberate provocation, neighbours must be able to clear up these kinds of things and get them off the agenda,” he quoted as saying by the STT news agency.

Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja said part of his visit to Moscow scheduled for early June, said local daily Helsingin Sanomat.

Vanhanen told the Parliament that although Russian planes’ infringement was not regarded as a deliberate provocation, neighbours must be able to clear up these kinds of things and get them off the agenda,” he quoted as saying by the STT news agency.

Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja said part of the infringement was believed to have been made by mistake, the STT reported. But Russia denied the accusation.

Finnish President Tarja Halonen said the violation was a serious issue and hoped for a thorough investigation, local media reported.

Finnish Prime Minister Matti Vanhanen will raise the issue with his Russian counterpart Rafael Bielsa.

The agreement is the culmination of productive integration, military cooperation, infrastructure, energy, and border relations, and came after a series of political and commercial differences between the two main trade partners of the Common Market of the South, which also groups Paraguay and Uruguay.

MNA/Xinhua
CPC official meets Peruvian popular action party delegation

BEIJING, 21 May—A senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) said here Friday that China regards strengthening relations with Peru and other developing countries as an important basis for its foreign policy.

Li Changchun, member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, made the remark during a meeting with a delegation from the Popular Action Party of Peru, which is headed by its leader, Valentin Paniagua.

Li said China and Peru announced the establishment of an “all-round cooperative partnership” in early 2005. This signified that the relations between the two countries have entered a new stage of development.

Li said China is ready to join efforts with Peru to further deepen friendly cooperation in various areas and continuously add new impetus to the Peru-Chinese all-round cooperative partnership.

Li thanked Peru for supporting China on such issues as Taiwan, Tibet and human rights.

On the relationship between CPC and the Popular Action Party of Peru, Li said that the CPC is ready to strengthen friendly communications with the Popular Action Party and other political parties in Peru. This will jointly push forward the extensive growth of the all-round cooperative partnership between the two countries.

Paniagua said both Peru and China are civilized countries with a long history. The people of both countries have reinforced and strengthened their traditional friendship during the past few years.

Paniagua said that friendly communications between the Popular Action Party of Peru and the CPC of China have already become a crucial factor to promote bilateral relations.

Noting that Peru is said to lead the huge Latin American countries, Paniagua said that China made in its reform and opening to the outside world, and Peru is the country where the Chinese people even greater achievements in the process of building their bright future and realizing the reunification of the country. —MNA/Xinhua

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British scientists clone human embryo

**LONDON, 21 May** — British scientists have created a cloned human embryo for the first time, placing the country in the vanguard of a technology with the potential to cure conditions such as Parkinson’s, diabetes and paralysis, The Times reported on Friday.

The Newcastle University team produced three cloned embryos, one of which survived to the blastocyst stage of about 100 cells, at which stem cells can be collected. All these cells are clones of patients with Type 1 diabetes, spinal injuries or an immune system disease.

Genetic testing has confirmed that the cells would be immunologically compatible were they to be transplanted, but it is too early to attempt this safely, the newspaper said.

“We are bringing science a step forward towards the day when some of humankind’s most devastating diseases and injuries can be treated through the use of therapeutic stem cell,” the paper quoted professor Hwang, member of the team, as saying. The development came as the South Korean researchers who pioneered human cloning last year announced breakthroughs that bring its medical promise closer to reality.

These advances pave the way for using cloned embryonic stem cells — master cells that can form any tissue in the body — to create spare part tissue for treating disease.

The research has ignited controversy over the ethics of human cloning even for therapeutic purposes.

Critics said that the new research would assist efforts to produce a cloned baby as the methods involved are virtually identical. They also objected to the destruction of embryonic life and said that any form of cloning insults human dignity.

Other critics, however, said it would be immoral not to proceed. “To fail to develop therapies that would save 100,000 people is morally equivalent to killing 100,000 people,” the paper cited Professor Julian Savulescu, of Oxford University, as saying.

**S Korea to send 200,000 tons of fertilizer to N Korea**

**SEOUL, 21 May** — South Korea plans to complete the shipment of fertilizer aid to North Korea by mid-June in consideration of the imminent rice-planting season, South Korean officials said Thursday.

In the just-ended working-level talks, South Korea pledged to give 200,000 tons of fertilizer aid to North Korea, as part of its implementation of an agreement with the latter Thursday, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported.

Chances are high that Seoul will provide additional fertilizer aid as the two sides agreed to continue to discuss the issue at the ministerial talks to be held in Seoul on June 21-24, the report said.

The (South) Korean National Red Cross will be responsible for purchasing and transporting the fertilizer. The first shipment will be made via an inter-Korean road along the west coast Saturday, and thereafter by road and sea routes simultaneously, the officials said. South Korea sent 155,000 tons of fertilizer in humanitarian aid to North Korea for the first time in 1989, and 200,000-300,000 tons annually in the following years, the report said.

South Korean scientists who cloned the first human embryo to use for research said on 19 May, 2005. They have used the same technology to create batches of embryonic stem cells from nine patients. — INTERNET

**East African labour ministers unveil plan to create jobs**

**NAIROBI, 21 May** — East African ministers responsible for labour and employment have adopted an action programme to promote employment and poverty alleviation in the region, local officials disclosed on Thursday.

A statement from the East African Community (EAC) Secretariat said that employment and poverty alleviation are major priority in the region in order to make them more effective in promoting role in employment and poverty alleviation.

“...They resolved to intensify cooperation at the EAC regional level towards the achievement of the goals of full employment and poverty alleviation by harmonizing their employment policies, labour legislations and investment codes," the statement said. Speaking during the meeting, EAC Secretary-General Amanya MUSHEGA urged the EAC states to make employment creation and poverty alleviation a major priority in the region.

MUSHEGA said the EAC partner states should adopt effective policies and strategies and pursue common projects and programmes to attract investments and enhance employment in the region.

According to the statement, the four ministers agreed to take measures to harmonize the mandates of the ministries responsible for labour in the region in order to make them more effective in performing their role in employment and poverty alleviation.

**Wen calls for overseas Chinese to promote peaceful reunification**

**BEIJING, 21 May** — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for overseas Chinese to help establish a new world textile trade order, the China Textile Industry Council said on Friday, following a government decision to raise drastically the export tariffs on some export textile products.

Sun Huabin, spokesman for the Council, told Xinhua that the Council could understand the decision of the government through Chinese companies to “make sacrifice” for it.

“China is a responsible country, and it is for the purpose of helping establish a new world textile trade order and ease the trade friction that the government made the concession,” Sun said.

“But our company would have to make sacrifice for such a new trade order," said Sun.

The Customs Tariff Commission of the State Council, China’s Cabinet, announced it would raise the export tariffs on 74 sorts of textile products, with a 400-per cent hike for most of the products, beginning 1 June, 2005.

The tariffs on these products were imposed beginning 1 January this year.

Sun noted that the tariff hike would sure result in an increase of cost and decrease of profits for domestic companies. Some companies might sustain losses and textile workers might lose their jobs.

“This is what we don’t want to see," said Sun.

According to the spokesman, the textile industry has a bearing on the life of tens of millions of low-income workers, and in Chinese factories, the average profit of a shirt is only 30-40 US cents. — Xinhua

**Chinese companies “make sacrifice” for world textile trade**

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**S African minister to visit China on job creation**

**JOHANNESBURG, 21 May** — South African Labour Minister Membathisi Mdladlana is to leave for China on Friday to discuss employment creation and vocational training in international labour organizations.

Page Bokango, spokesman for the minisry said Thursday that Minister Mdladlana is to pay a visit to Beijing “with an intention of strengthening bilateral relations with his Chinese counterpart”.

The visit is taking place within the context of several memoranda of understanding signed between the two countries, which provide for continuous exchange visits at ministerial level as well as visits by senior officials and study tour groups in specialized fields. — MNA/Xinhua

**UN appeals to combat food crisis in Niger**

**NIGERIA, 21 May** — The United Nations issued a flash appeal for Niger on Friday, asking for 16.19 million US dollars to combat the severe food crisis threatening the African country.

Immediate needs include food aid for some 3.6 million people in 3,815 villages, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement. — MNA/Xinhua

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Schalke, Bremen clinch Champions League places

BERLIN, 22 May — Schalke 04 and Werder Bremen clinched the two remaining Champions League places on the final day of the Bundesliga season on Saturday thanks to Bayern Munich’s ninth successive victory over VfB Stuttgart.

Schalke secured the runners-up spot, 14 points behind Bayern, with a 3-2 win away to bottom Freiburg. An Ebbe Sand strike and two Marcelo Bordon headers saw the Gelsenkirchen side home.

Stuttgart needed a home win over Bayern to be sure of keeping hold of third place but was overpowered by the champions, who closed out the season with a 3-1 win from goals from Michael Ballack, Hasan Salihagic and Roy Makaay.

Stuttgart’s defeat opened the door for Hertha Berlin to take third place but the club from the capital missed out as it was held to a goalless draw at home to Hanover 96.

Werder Bremen, last season’s doubles winners, duly took advantage with a 2-1 win away to bottom club Freiburg. An Ebbe Sand strike and two Marcelo Bordon headers saw the Gelsenkirchen side home.

Schalke, who finished with 63 points, gain direct entry to the Champions League, while Bremen, in third place, against the Gelsenkirchen side third in the UEFA Cup qualification place with

a 1-1 win at home to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Schalke was far from convincing against Freiburg but got the win it needed thanks to Bordon’s two classy headers in the second half.

Sand had put them ahead with a close-range finish early on, only for Aleksandar Kolarov to score on the rebound and draw level in the 11th minute.

Bordon, one of the outstanding defenders in the Bundesliga this season, put Schalke back in front in the 55th minute when he nodded in from a free kick and the Brazilian clinched victory with another header a minute from time after Roda Antar had equalized.

Bayern proved far too strong for Stuttgart. Ballack had a faint touch on a Sebas-

tian Deisler free-kick for the opener in the 27th minute and Salihagic headed in the second three minutes later.

Makaay took his goals total for the season to 22 with the third in the 71st minute and Imre Szabics struck a late goal that was no consolation at all for Stuttgart. — MNA/Xinhua

Luxemburgo discontent with Lukewarm Madrid Derby

MADRID, 22 May — Real Madrid coach Vanderlei Luxemburgo said their 0-0 home draw with Atletico Madrid lacked rhythm and intensity, looking like a friendly.

“The two teams thought it as a classical match, as nearly all is said in this tournament, but it was a boring match. Real needs motivation for the final game of the season against Zaragoza. Today it seemed as if we were playing a friendly match,” Luxemburgo said after Saturday’s game.

“I am disappointed at the result, for I think people would have been happy with a victory against Atletico,” he added.

Ronald, who is seeking to become the Primera Liga top scorer, was replaced with 15 minutes to go.

“I am the Real Madrid coach and I am not interested in those things. I seek the best for the team,” said Luxemburgo, explaining the substitution.

Atletico coach Cesar Ferrando said his team could have won in the second half. — MNA/Xinhua

Answers to yesterday’s Crossword Puzzle

Liverpool to play J-League clubs on summer tour

TOKYO, 22 May — English Premier League side Liverpool will take on J-League clubs Shimizu S-Pulse and Kashima Antlers on a pre-season tour of Japan this summer, organizers said here on Saturday.

Liverpool, who faces Italian powerhouse AC Milan in the final of the European Champions League in Istanbul next week, will play Shimizu at Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa on July 27 before facing Kashima at Kashima Stadium three days later.

Liverpool is among a number of top European clubs, including Premier League rival Manchester United, Spanish champion Barcelona and Italian giant Juventus touring Japan this summer.

Arklen beat unlucky United to win FA Cup final

CARDIFF, 22 May — Arsenal won the FA Cup final 5-4 on penalties Saturday when they rode their luck to survive ferocious attacks by Manchester United.

Arsenal captain Patrick Vieira coolly converted the final spot-kick in front of the United fans after his teammate Jens Lehmann had saved a Paul Scholes penalty. But the Gunners, who finished the match with 10 men after Jose Antonio Reyes was sent off in extra time, were not the deserved victors of a game in which their arch-rivals made all the best chances and enjoyed no luck.

Inspired by the banner of Manchester United defender Rio Ferdinand, winger Cristiano Ronaldo, United dominated throughout and Arsenal failed to create a single clearcut scoring chance.

“I think in the second half Manchester United played very well, and we had to drop deep and keep it tight. As long as nobody scored we were okay,” said Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger. “I’m very proud, we had to dig deep today, and we were a bit lucky, it’s hard for the team that loses like that because it was a very intense game.”

Arsenal’s victory completed a dis-

appointing season for United, for whom the build-up was overshadowed by the takeover of the club by American businessman Malcolm Glazer last week.

United manager Alex Ferguson, whose side finished third in the Premier League behind Chelsea and Arsenal, blamed his players’ wayward fin-

ishing. “We are disappointed, we’ve missed chances all season, our goalscoring has let us down and we’ve only got ourselves to blame in a way.”

Everton agrees with Tottenham for Davies move

LONDON, 22 May — Everton has agreed with Tottenham Hotspur to sell winger Simon Davies in a deal worth up to four million pounds (3.76 million US dollars).

“Simon has given this club great service but he was ready for a new chal-

lengew and we wish him all the best,” Tottenham’s sporting director Frank Arnesen told the club’s official website.

The deal is subject to Davies, who has scored 24 goals in 154 appear-

ances, agreeing personal terms. — MNA/Xinhua

Clijsters enters French open despite knee problem

PARIS, 22 May — Former world number one Kim Clijsters, a doubtful starter for the French Open because of a knee injury, said on Saturday she would definitely play in the Grand Slam tournament starting on Monday.

The Belgian, a runner-up up at Roland Garros in 2001 and 2003, strained ligaments in her right knee in a warm-up event and feared she might have to miss the highlight of the claycourt season for the second successive year.

“I’ll try to play a good match in the first round,” she said. “The last couple of days I’ve been building up my practice sessions,” she said. “Today was the first time I actually played some points. I was still a little shaky. “I have to be careful and look after my body really well. Then, hope-

fully, I can build up my game and try to feel com-
fortable. “It’s a challenge but I’m going to go for it.”

Injured Joachim Johansson withdraws from French open

STOCKHOLM, 22 May — Sweden’s highest ranked player Joachim Johansson has pulled out of next week’s French Open because of an elbow injury, the Swedish news agency TT reported on Saturday.

The hard-serving, 22-year-old Johansson announced his decision at the World Team Cup in Dusseldorf where he has played for Sweden alongside Thomas Johansson.

Johansson was briefly in the top 10 earlier this year, winning titles in Adelaide and Marseille, and is cur-

rently ranked 12th.

His withdrawal means his compatriot Robin Soderling becomes the 33rd seed at Roland Garros. Soderling was originally due to play world number one Roger Federer in the opening round but as a seed will instead face Spaniard Fernando Verdasco.

Federer will face a qualifier or a lucky loser. — MNA/Xinhua
Kalam’s visit to boost defence, space cooperation with Russia

Moscow, 22 May — Indian President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam’s four-day tour to Russia, as part of his four-year visit to the country, would be instrumental in partnership in defence and space, said the President. He is also scheduled to visit NPO Mashinostroyenie missile design bureau in Reutov Town, which is Brahman partner in the joint venture, and meet his former Russian colleagues and friends.

Kalam has also been closely associated with multi-role Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter project and will visit Sukhoi Aircraft Corporation in Moscow.

This would be the first state visit of an Indian President to the country in the last 17 years.

R. Venkataraman had visited the erstwhile Soviet Union to close a year-long festival of India in 1988.

“This is a manifestation of the high level of our diplomatic ties and part of the intensification of high level political exchanges besides annual summits,” said Bhabha.

Kalam’s Russia visit would also be the very first by a President of India after the Soviet collapse. The President is arriving in Moscow on Sunday afternoon and would meet with the local Indian community the same evening at a reception hosted by the Indian Ambas-
dator to Russia

WEATHER

Summary of observations recorded at 09:00 hours MST:

During the past 24 hours, rain or thunderstorms have been widespread in Chin State, scattered in Kayin and Mon States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions, isolated in Shan, Rakhine States. Magway Division with isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay Division and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Bago (1.85) inches and Meiktila (1.77) inches. Day temperatures were (4°C) below normal in Sagaing Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Rakhine, Mon and Kayin States, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions. (5°C) to (6°C) above normal in Ayeyawady Division and above normal in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant day temperatures were Minbu and Magway (42°C) each. Maximum temperature on 21-5-2005 was 96°F. Minimum temperature on 22-5-2005 was 71°F. Relative humidity at 9:00 hrs MST on 22-5-2005 was 85%. Total sunshine hours on 21-5-2005 was (9.1) hours approx. Rainfalls on 22-5-2005 were (0.20) inch at Yangon Airport, (0.12) inch at Akyab-Aye and Kinniya, (0.11) inches at central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were (4.57) inches at Yangon Airport, (4.96) inches at Kaba-Aye and (5.11) inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (12) mph from Southeast at (20:05) hours MST on 21-5-2005.

Bay inference: Monsoon is feeble in the South andaman Sea and South Bay. Weather is partly cloudy in the North andaman Sea and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 23-5-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms in Rakhin, Chin States, upper Sagaing Division, scattered in Mon, Kayin States, Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (60%). State of the seas: Will be slight in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Thunder conditions in Lower Yangon areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 23-5-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (60%). Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 23-5-2005: Partly cloudy.

Ashleb in Jesus

Noel Simons @ U Zaw Win

Age (51) years


Funeral service will be held on 24th May at 9.00am at St John’s Cantonment Church on Shwe Dagon Pagoda Road and thence to Way Watery.
Yangon, 22 May — Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo inspected plantations of jute and kenaf near Yenangyaung village, Wataw.

At Shwedagon Pagoda, the Buddha Day was held this morning. Ovadaçariya Sayadaws of Shwedagon Pagoda Board of Trustees and members of the pagoda board of trustees poured water to the Buddha Image and the Bo tree.

On the occasion, the congregation paid homage to the Buddha image. Next, a layman recited religious Gathas. After reciting religious verses, members of the religious associations watered the Bo tree.

The precinct and platform of the pagoda were crowded with devotees and pilgrims from morning to evening.

Similarly, the ceremony to pour water to a Bo tree took place at the precinct of Maha Wizaya Pagoda on Dhamma Rekkhita Hill, here.

At Sule Pagoda, the Buddha Day on fullmoon day of Kason was observed this morning.

Noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Amount (inches)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bago</td>
<td>1.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meiktila</td>
<td>1.77</td>
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Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo inspects jute and kenaf plantations in Maubin Township. — AGRI & IRRI

Myanmar Jute Enterprise, the minister instructed officials to give technological assistance to farmers for the extension of jute and kenaf plantations.

Farmers reported on production of 200 to 300 viss of jute per acre. The minister viewed thriving plantations of jute and kenaf and gave necessary instructions to officials.

The minister discussed with the local farmers for production of new quality paddy species and purchase of tractors for farm use.

Later, Maubin District PDC Chairman Lt-Col Sein Maung, Myanmar Jute Enterprise Managing Director U Ye Phone Myint and Myanmar Agriculture Service Managing Director U Ohn Than reported on arrangements for departmental assistance. — MNA