Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Sunday, 3 July, 2005

Honouring Myanmar Women’s Day

Today, 3 July 2005, is Myanmar Women’s Day, which has been designated in honour of the entire mass of Myanmar women. There emerged a number of outstanding Myanmar women. Women with brilliant performance, model heroines and women who served the national interest with might and main in the anti-colonialist and independence struggles had been well documented in Myanmar history. The Government of the Union of Myanmar formed the Myanmar National Working Committee for Women’s Affairs on 3 July 1996, and has designated and marked Myanmar Women’s Day yearly as from 3 July 1998.

Nowadays, the number of Myanmar women is over 27 million, accounting for more than half the population of Myanmar which stands at 54.29 million. The MWAF is trying its utmost to enhance the role of women in building a peaceful, modern and developed nation, to protect the rights of women and to ensure the economic, health, educational and general care of women and to take measures for their security. In doing so, the MWAF is serving the interests of the State and the people through its own ability and capability without relying on any others. The MWAF is a social organization which is giving special priority to the national concerns. It is also an organization keeping in the fore Our Three Main National Causes—non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty, which is the national politics. The MWAF was formed with the aim of enhancing the standard of women and taking measures for their security and of ensuring the emergence of a national force. The Myanmar women that constitute more than half the Myanmar population are the ones who have been serving the interests of the State and the people through unity and capability. Therefore, the Myanmar Women’s Day which represents the entire mass of Myanmar women, is worthy of honour.

Cash donated to child nurseries

YANGON, 2 July — A ceremony to donate cash to child nurseries of the Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement took place at Shwewodine Child Nursery in Bahan Township on 28 June.

At the ceremony, Maj Soe Win Naing and Daw Aye Myat Myaw and daughter Ma Swe Zin Naing of No 4, Hnisii Street, Htanbingon Ward, Daw Aye Myat Myaw and daughter Ma Swe Resettlement took place at Shwegondine Child Nursery under the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement on 3 July 2005. — MNA

Minister to discuss energy coopn in PRC, India, Thailand

YANGON, 2 July — The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi left here by air at 8.15 am today to coordinate energy cooperation matters in the People’s Republic of China and in India and Thailand. They were seen off at the airport by Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa, Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htay, ChineseAmbassador Mr Rajiv Dhirakaosal, departmental heads of the Ministry of Energy, officials, and families. — MNA

Foreigmn Minister sends message to Belarus

YANGON, 3 July — U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Martinov Sergei Nikolavevich, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus which falls on 3 July 2005. — MNA

C-in-C (Navy)’s Cup boxing tourney concludes

YANGON, 2 July — The final match and prize-presentation of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy)’s Cup boxing tournament took place at Thaha Thura Tun Tin Hall of Ayeyawady Naval Region Command Headquarters yesterday afternoon. Among the spectators were officers and other ranks of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy)’s Office, Yangoon and Tharyin Stations. After the final match, officials presented prizes to winners and Command Captain Aye Pe presented championship shield to Ayeyawady Naval Region Command team. — MNA

C-in-C (Airy)’s Cup football tourney ends

YANGON, 2 July — The final match and prize-presentation of the Commander-in-Chief (Airy)’s Cup football tournament took place at the grounds of Meiktila Ground Training Base yesterday afternoon. Among the football fans were Commander Col Thura Khin Maung Win, senior military officers and other ranks. Ground Training Base team won the championship shield. — MNA

Deputy Health Minister leaves for Bangladesh

YANGON, 2 July — Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo left here by air yesterday evening to attend the 11th Health Secretaries’ Meeting of World Health Organization in ASEAN countries and the health plan management meeting to be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 3 to 7 July.

The deputy minister was seen off at the airport by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, directors-general and officials. The deputy minister was accompanied by Director-General Dr Tin Win Maung of Health Department, Deputy Director Dr Soe Lwin Nyein and International Relations Officer Dr Tin Tun Aung. — MNA

Deputy Health Minister leaves for Bangladesh

YANGON, 2 July — The Greater Mekong Sub-region Business Forum will be held in Kunming, Yunnan Province, the People’s Republic of China, from 3 to 5 July. A Myanmar delegation comprising Vice-President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Zaw Min Win, U Aung Lwin and U Thaung Tin, CEC members U Way Phyo and U Moe Kyaw, Executive U Paw Hein and other members yesterday left here by air to attend the Forum. Similarly, another delegation comprising Vice-President of UMFCCI U Win Aung (Chairman of GMS-BF), Joint-Secretary-2 U Tun Aung, CEC members U Tun Aung, U Myat Thin Aung, U Nyein, U Mya Han and U Nyein Aung, Executive Officer U Myint Aung and other members also left here by air this evening to attend the Forum. They were seen off at the airport by UMFCCI President U Win Myint, General Secretary U Sein Win Hlaing and officials. — MNA

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appealed

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
**ASEAN-China FTA to significantly benefit intra-regional economy**

JAKARTA, 1 July — The ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) to be implemented on 1 July will significantly benefit the intra-regional trade and economy and establish a milestone for the future of ASEAN-China economic ties, ASEAN Secretary-General said here on Thursday.

The establishment of ACFTA will create a new economic region with 1.7 billion consumers, a regional GDP of about two trillion US dollars and total annual trade volume estimated at 1.23 trillion US dollars, Secretary-General Ong Keng Yong said in a statement exclusively for Xinhua.

The removal of trade barriers between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China will lower costs, increase trade volume and beef up economic efficiency, he said.

The ACFTA will create a sense of community among ASEAN member countries and provide another important mechanism for supporting economic stability in East Asia and allow both ASEAN and China to have a larger voice in international trade affairs.

**Nepal sends letters to explore foreign jobs**

KATHMANDU, 1 July — The Nepali Government has sent letters to different countries as its strategy to start sending skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled Nepali manpower to those countries, a government official said here on Thursday.

The Nepali Government has sent letters to the governments of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Oman and South Korea, Labour and Transport Management Minister Ram Narayan Singh told reporters.

The minister had talked about the matters at the labour conference in Geneva last month and the sending of the letters was a follow up to the Geneva talks, he said.

Those countries have agreed to take in Nepali workers, he said.

According to the minister, the government is preparing to send an expert's team to the countries to find the prospect to the jobs.

However, he said that the government was introducing a new labour act to manage all sectors related to foreign employment.

Under the new arrangement, the selection will be done fairly giving priority to the deserving and the victims of conflict in the country.

"We are also planning to manage the labour market abroad," he said, adding that the government was preparing to send labour attaché in countries where the number of Nepali workers is high.

**US Army faces risk in reaching recruitment goal**

WASHINGTON, 1 July — The US Army faces "serious risk" in reaching its goal of 80,000 recruits this year and may experience more trouble next year, partly due to the strain caused by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, a top Army general said on Thursday.

General Peter Schoomaker, the Army's Chief of Staff, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the Army met only 84 per cent of the year-to-date recruitment target, 7,800 recruits behind the goal.

Next year "may be the toughest recruiting environment ever," Schoomaker said. "It is critical to recognize and acknowledge the war-induced strain felt by our institution and the soldiers and their families who are bearing the burden of this global war," he said.

Schoomaker asked lawmakers for support in the Army's recruitment effort. "It's very important that you and your colleagues use your considerable influence to explain to the American people and to those that are influencers out there how important it is for our young people to serve this nation at a time like this," he said.

Several senators blamed the news media for partly contributing to the recruiting shortfall.

"With the deluge of negative news that we get daily, it's just amazing to me that anybody would want to sign up," said Senator Pat Roberts, a Republican from Kansas.

**Cook says Bush, Blair "no idea" how to win Iraq war**

LONDON, 1 July — Former British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook on Friday stepped up his criticism of the Iraq war, saying that both Prime Minister Tony Blair and US President George Bush had "no idea" how to win their war.

Both the British and American leaders are demanding domestic and international support and appealed this week for "strong nerves from everybody else" but have "no strategy" in Iraq, he said.

Cook has been a leading critic of the war since he became the only British minister to resign from his cabinet post as leader of the House of Commons in protest against Blair joining Bush in invading Iraq in March 2003.

In his latest article for the Guardian newspaper on Friday, he said that the current military approach by Britain and the US was "fatally flawed by two delusions."

"The first is the belief that they will win if only they can kill, capture or bury under rubble every insurgent," the former foreign secretary said.

He warned that the conflict will not be resolved "until US forces grasp that they breed more insurgents by the indiscriminate use of firepower and by putting higher priority on killing rebels rather than protecting civilians."

"The second delusion is the insistence that military occupation of Iraq is the solution to the violence and not a large part of its cause," Cook further said. He spelled out that both Bush and Blair have a responsibility and that "no strategy to end the insurgency is going to succeed, unless it includes an exit plan for foreign troops."

"Peace in Iraq will only be possible if they show the humility to admit the mistakes of the past and to accept that the recent strategy is not working," the former foreign secretary said.
Thai PM starts China tour aiming at closer ties

BEIJING, 1 July — Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra arrived here on Thursday for a three-day official visit to China, bringing an entourage that includes some 100 senior business executives in major industries.

During his stay in Beijing, Thaksin will hold talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, during which they are expected to sign several documents for bilateral cooperation, said sources with the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Before he left Bangkok, Thaksin told the Press that he hoped his talks with Chinese leaders would help improve the strategic partnership between the two countries and result in the formulation of concrete action plans to upgrade bilateral friendly relations to a higher level.

Economic and trade cooperation also topped Thaksin’s agenda, according to the ministry sources.

Born to a well-off Chinese-Thai business family in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai, Thaksin said he would visit Meizhou City of Guangdong Province in south China, where his forefathers used to live during World War II.

Chinese Premier urges building of energy-saving society

BEIJING, 1 July — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao called for building an energy-saving society and developing a recycling economy at a national video and telephone working meeting held here on Thursday.

The strain on energy and other resources will increase significantly as China’s industrialization, urbanization and modernization press forward. Therefore, the efficient utilization of resources is crucial, said Premier Wen at the meeting, presided over by Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan.

The key tasks for the Communist Party of China (CPC) in 2005 and 2006 includes the conservation of energy, water, raw materials, land resources, and utilization of mineral resources, industrial waste and recyclable resources.

China hopes for more Microsoft investment, outsourcing

BEIJING, 1 July — China hopes Microsoft could expand cooperation with Chinese partners and increase investment in and outsourcing from China, Vice-Premier Zeng Peiyan said here on Thursday.

The joint efforts of Microsoft and its Chinese partners to open up international and Chinese domestic markets would help push their cooperation in the software field to a new level, Zeng said during a meeting with Steve Anthony Ballmer, chief executive officer of the US-based software company.

Zeng said China has a broad and excellent human resources and a sound industrial foundation. The Chinese Government has put priority to the high-tech industry, including the software industry.

Over the past few years, the cooperation between Microsoft and its Chinese partners has been satisfactory in such fields as government security planning, the opening of source code, training and technological development.

“China will further protect intellectual property rights, adopt more incentive policies and create a good environment for more software cooperation between Chinese and foreign companies,” Zeng said.

Meanwhile, he said that China’s efforts in IPR protection, and Microsoft’s attached great importance to cooperation with China and would further expand its business in China.


US Marines accused of killing Iraq man

UNITED NATIONS, 2 July — Iraq’s UN ambassador accused US Marines of killing his unarmed young cousin in what appeared to be “cold blood” and demanded an investigation and punishment for the perpetrators.

In an e-mail to friends obtained on Friday by The Associated Press, Ambassador Samir Sumaidaie said the killing took place in his ancestral village in western Anbar province, where US-led forces have been conducting a counterinsurgency sweep aimed at disrupting the flow of foreign militants into Iraq.

His cousin Mohammed Al-Sumaidaie, 21, a university student, was killed June 25 when he took Marines doing house-to-house searches to a bedroom to show them where a rifle which had no live ammunition was kept, the ambassador said. When the Marines left, he was found in the bedroom with a bullet in his neck.

Richard Grenell, spokesman for the US Mission, said acting US ambassador Anne Patterson received a call from the Iraqi ambassador and “expressed her heartfelt condolences on this terrible situation, and contacted senior State Department and Pentagon officials to look into the matter immediately.”

Sumaidaie said the killing represents “a betrayal” of the values and aspirations of Iraqis and Americans to defeat the terrorists and build a country based on freedom, democracy, and respect for human rights and the rule of law.

“It is a betrayal of the American people who are making huge sacrifices to bring this about, and a betrayal of Iraq and all Iraqi patriots who have put their trust in the United States,” he said.

In the letter, Sumaidaie gave a detailed account of the tragedy.

Only 300 Malaysian experts working abroad return home

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 July — Only 300 of the targeted 4,000 Malaysian experts working abroad have returned since a scheme introduced in early 2001 to woo them back, Human Resources Minister Fong Chan Onn said on Thursday.

The reason is that most of the Malaysian companies cannot afford the high salary received by those experts working abroad, Fong told reporters after opening the two-day National Human Resources Summit 2005 here.

“Most of them who are at supervisory level will not be able to get the salary they earned abroad in Malaysia. However, there are several sectors which are able to give these people the desired salary,” Fong was quoted as saying by the Bernama news agency.

In 2001, the Human Resources Ministry decided to attract Malaysians engaged in six fields of expertise to return to work in the country.

A secretariat has been set up to accept their applications and the government has worked out several incentives to woo them back, Fong said.

One of those incentives is income tax exemptions for income earned abroad and then brought back into Malaysia within two years.

All personal belongings of those experts, including two cars, would be tax exempted, and their spouses and children who were not born in Malaysia could be granted permanent resident status in six months, Fong added.

Fong said his ministry should better inform Malaysian experts of these incentives and redouble its efforts to attract more professionals to return home.

MNA/Xinhua
Hu to seek more benefits for developing countries in G-8+5 dialogue

BUENOS AIRES, 1 July — Chinese President Hu Jintao is scheduled to attend a meeting with the Group of Eight in Britain next week where analysts expect he and other invited leaders will seek more benefits for developing countries.

The G-8 Summit Outreach Session between the G-8 and China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico will focus on issues like the world economy, African issue and global climate change.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Hu will meet leaders of the G-8 countries and other major developing countries, according to Li Hui, Assistant Foreign Minister of China.

China is expected to urge developed countries to reduce trade barriers, further open their market and transfer technology to developing countries, said Shao Feng, researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Liu Jianchao said Hu’s participation in the G-8 plus five summit is aimed at enhancing communication between developed and developing countries on key international issues and common challenges.

Hu will also discuss China’s energy policy and its general social and economic development and put forward certain cooperative proposals to that end, Liu said.

The G-8 comprises the world's seven leading industrial powers — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — plus Russia.

The G-8 has evolved from a “rich club” to a “major power’s club”, Shao said. “The G-8 plus five meeting is an important diplomacy platform for the major powers.”

Hu's attendance indicates that the developed industrial countries recognize the increasing influence of China, which will seek benefits for itself and other developing countries.

Though it was decided at the G-8 financial ministers' meeting to eliminate 40 billion US dollars of debt in 18 countries, most developing countries still lack a “blood-making” mechanism, or the capability to reach sustainable development, according to analysts.

Number of overseas job agencies in China on rise

QINGDAO, 1 July — The number of overseas job agencies providing service for those who seek job abroad has risen from 38 in 1992 to the present 371, Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Security Wang Dongjin said here on Tuesday.

About three-quarters of the job agencies are non-public companies. Previously, they were dominated by state-owned enterprises in governmental institutions, Wang said at a work conference in this port city of east China’s Shandong Province.

The number of Chinese citizens seeking jobs abroad has grown from only 1,000 in 1993 to the present hundred of thousands. The Chinese labour export in traditional sectors has maintained a certain scale, while that of sophisticated engineers and technicians are also on the rise, Wang said.

With the development of economic globalization, China will seize time to establish a job market in line with international practices. "That will not only alleviate the long-standing employment pressure within China, but also help improve the competitive capability of the Chinese," Wang said.

Japanese PM promises $500m in disease donation

Tokyo, 1 July — Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged on Thursday 500 million US dollars in donation to a fund against serious diseases like AIDS.

Addressing a symposium here on the Global Fund to Fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Premier said infectious disease is one of the most immediate urgent tasks confronting the human being. "We cannot tolerate a situation in which one person dies every five seconds somewhere in the world from these three killer diseases," he said.

Koizumi said the issue of fighting infectious diseases is a major concern for participants in next week's summit of the Group of Eight (G-8) in Britain.

Professional, skilled employees get higher salaries in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 1 July — Employees with professional and specialized skills continued to get higher salaries in Singapore, according to an annual report published by the Ministry of Manpower on Thursday.

Professionals received the highest average starting grossed earnings at 2,400 Singapore dollars (about 1,423 US dollars) per month in June last year, followed by technicians and associate professionals at 1,779 Singapore dollars (about 1,056 US dollars), the Report on Wages in Singapore, 2004 said.

New entrants in less skilled jobs, such as clerks, sales and service workers, cleaners as well as machine operators, got lower starting pay ranging from 1,300 Singapore dollars (about 772 US dollars) to 898 Singapore dollars (about 533 US dollars).

British says time to gear up eco partnership with India

LONDON, 1 July — With India’s role in the global economy expanding rapidly, Britain has said it is time for it to go up a gear in India-British economic and trade partnership.

Britain’s Minister for Foreign Trade, Ian Pearson said that more and more Indian companies are finding that partnership with British companies and access to the British’s intellectual capital are becoming a vital tool in their efforts to develop a global presence.

"Indian firms in Britain are making major R and D investments here, particularly in the IT and pharmaceutical sectors," Pearson said while speaking on Britain-India Bilateral Relations at Chatham House here on Tuesday.

"The business relationship is undoubtedly strong and growing. But with India’s role in the global economy expanding rapidly, it is time for Britain to go up a gear in our economic and trade partnership. That means both developing bilateral trade and investment and working together on international issues," he said.

Pearson said “film production is an area of growing cooperation between the two countries.” By 2008 the market for Indian film production in Britain is expected to be worth 1.3 billion pounds. Under JETCO (Joint Economic and Trade Committee set up by the two prime ministers) good progress is being made towards the signing of a film co-production agreement,” he said.

Aircraft escapes accident in eastern Nepal

KATHMANDU, 1July — A Dornier aircraft belonging to a private sector, skidded off at the runway of an airport Thursday morning in eastern Nepal, radio Nepal reported.

“The aircraft carrying nine passengers along with three crew-members skidded off the runway while landing in Lukla Airport of Solukhumbu District, some 200 kilometres east of Kathmandu, at around 7:30 am local time (0145 GMT),” the state-run Radio Nepal quoted airlines officials as saying.

The aircraft suffered some damage while skidding off in Lukla, the officials noted, adding, “All the passengers and crew members are safe and there were no foreigners in the aircraft.”

The aircraft, registration number 9N-AEO, had left Kathmandu at 6:45 am local time (0100 GMT) in the morning.

Lukla is the gateway to the Mount Quomolangma region, and the airport is one of the busiest airports of Nepal. Located at the height of 2,743 metres, Lukla Airport has an inclined runway and is considered as one of the most difficult landing airports in the world.

A Dornier aircraft belonging to Sita Air had also reported under carriage malfunction while trying to land at the same airport some six months ago.

Japanese women check a Live 8 Japan programme before the Japan leg of the global music marathon Live 8. on 2 July, 2005 at Makuhari Messe in Makuhari, east of Tokyo. —INTERNET

US soldier patrols a highway at the al-Jadriyah area in central Baghdad on 1 July, 2005. —INTERNET

MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua
Pakistanis students in India, adding new warmth to bilateral ties

NEW DELHI, 1 July — After artists and sportspersons, it is now the turn for students to strengthen the relationship between India and Pakistan by creating a platform for exchange of technical know-how between the two countries.

A delegation of 20 engineering students from the national university of computer and emerging sciences in Lahore, Pakistan is now in India to attend an educational-cum-technical exchange programme “confluence-05”.

Organized by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE) of New Delhi’s Jamia Millia University, the two-day programme also drew together students from other engineering colleges in New Delhi, besides those from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Delhi and Chennai.

“There has been Indo-Pak collaboration in the field of sports and entertainment, but it is for the first time that engineering students from Pakistan are coming to India for such an educational programme,” Vice-Chancellor of Jamia Millia University Professor Mushirul Hassan said Thursday.

“Our visit to India is part of the educational programme that began in March this year in which 41 students from India, including 11 from Jamia University visited our university in Lahore,” Nauman Saeed Anwar, a senior IT student who leads the Pakistan delegation said.

“While India’s IT industry is one of the largest in the world, ours is at a growing stage. This programme would help us study the Indian success story in the IT sector and how it can be put to use in our country,” Anwar said.

The idea for an Indo-Pak exchange programme stemmed from an Asian student conference organized by the professional body, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineering (IEEE).

Students of the two countries met at the conference and decided to launch the programme, with the thaw in Indo-Pak relations providing the encouragement.

The two-day programme includes technical lectures, seminars and workshops.

Chancellor of Jamia Millia University

The report quoted a joint statement by the ambassadors as saying that they supported the minister’s view that it is essential for Singaporean students to learn and understand the horrible crimes, which were committed under Nazi rule, and the lessons which have to be drawn from them.

Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam stressed on Tuesday that there should be increased emphasis on historical events in Nazi Germany in Singapore’s school curriculum.

The remarks came after a local news report last Saturday on the incident that a group of Singaporean students chose “Adolf Hitler” as their group name and idol during a leadership camp.

The ambassadors were quoted as saying that they were shocked and saddened by both the students’ obvious unawareness of their choice and the fact that the naive decision was not stopped by sound advice of the adults involved.

They offered to meet teachers and students and to explain the historical and political implications of Nazi rule, as well as to establish contacts between the Education Ministry and institutions in their respective countries which have special expertise in this area.

Ambassadors support S’pore Minister’s remarks on Hitler

SINGAPORE, 1 July — The Israeli and German ambassadors to Singapore have expressed their support for Singapore Education Minister’s remarks on Adolf Hitler and his Nazi rule, according to local news report on Wednesday night.

The report quoted a joint statement by the ambassadors as saying that they supported the minister’s view that it is essential for Singaporean students to learn and understand the horrible crimes, which were committed under Nazi rule, and the lessons which have to be drawn from them.

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Netherlands co mergers with China’s glasses firm

BEIJING, 1 July — Netherlands-based HAL company, the European largest investment company in the glasses industry has acquired 78 per cent of a renowned glasses company in Shanghai, according to Thursday’s Orient Morning Post.

HAL offered 214 million yuan (25.8 million US dollars) for the merger transaction with the Hongxing Glasses Company, a subsidiary of the Yiming Department Store, a listed company on the Shanghai Stock Exchange. Yiming is expected to gain 85 million yuan from the deal, according to the newspaper.

Last year the sales volume of Hongxing reached 100 million yuan, with profits of 18 million yuan, the newspaper said.

Philippine first gentleman offers to go abroad

MANILA, 1 July — Philippine First Gentleman Jose Miguel “Mike” Arroyo said on Wednesday that he would choose to go abroad to get her wife rid of the political embarrassment she is suffering from the scandal of her family members’ benefitting from illegal gambling.

Mr. Arroyo said in a statement that he had offered to leave to give his wife, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, “peace of mind”.

“I love my wife very much. It has been difficult for me to see her suffer through the negative press I have received,” he said.

“If there is anything I can do, any sacrifice I can make, to give her peace of mind, I would never hesitate to do it,” he added.

The First Gentleman, however, noted that being away from his wife and his family is “a very painful decision”.

President Arroyo earlier Wednesday announced at the “Business Meets Government Roundtable” that she was letting go her husband, who had volunteered to leave the country to allow her “serve my countrymen without any question on my integrity”.

“Today, my family is once again called to sacrifice our personal happiness to allow me to serve best as President of our country,” she said. — MNA/Xinhua

China plays active role in cooperation among GMS countries

BEIJING, 1 July — With responsible attitude, China has actively participated in economic development of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) in the past decade, in a bid to push forward the full-spectrum cooperation among member countries, said a Chinese diplomat on Wednesday.

Shen Guofang, Assistant Foreign Minister, made the remarks at a Press conference, just before the upcoming second summit of the Greater Mekong Subregion on Economic Cooperation Programme (GMS).

He said that as a founding GMS member country, China has attached great importance to poverty alleviation and regional economic development of GMS countries.

Shen Jiru, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, told Xinhua that as a responsible country, China has insisted on principles of equal negotiation, mutual benefit, and regional development. Since the GMS was established in 1992, China has signed the “Agreement for Facilitation of Cross-Border Transport of Goods and People”, sponsored the sea route development project of the upper Mekong River, and accelerated construction of the Kunming-Bangkok highway.

China also signed the agreement on the regional power trade among GMS countries, upgraded the on-line telecommunication capability and bridged the digital gap.

Shen Jiru noted that by providing funds and technology, China tries to help the nations that are relatively underdeveloped in economy to shake off poverty, improve people’s life quality and maintain social stability.

Cooperation have also extended among China and other five subregional countries in such fields as agriculture, human resources, health, and telecommunication.

Leaders from China, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam and ADP president will gather in Kunming, capital of southwest China’s Yunnan Province on 4-5 July, to discuss how to reinforce GMS cooperation and promote mutual prosperity.

Japanese robotics venture Spectys CEO Tomoaki Kasuga displays Spectys-FC the world’s first robot powered by fuel-cell batteries on 30 June 2005.
Vietnam raises poverty criteria

HANOI, 2 July — Fuelled by the faster-than-expected poverty reduction pace, Vietnam has decided to raise its poverty criteria, resulting in bigger percentage of poor local households.

The Vietnamese Government has just agreed with a plan by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to adjust the criteria at 260,000 Vietnamese dong (VND) (nearly 16.5 dollars) per month for urban dwellers and 200,000 VND (nearly 12.7 dollars) for rural residents, the Office for the National Hunger Alleviation and Poverty Reduction Programme told Xinhua on Friday.

When the new poverty criteria are applied, up to 26 per cent of local households will be considered poor now. Vietnam plans to reduce the rate to 15 per cent in 2010.

With the old criteria, 80,000 VND (5.1 dollars) per month for those living in mountainous areas and islands, VND 100,000 (6.3 dollars) for rural residents, and 150,000 VND for urban dwellers, Vietnam now has 1.2 million poor households, accounting for 7.3 per cent of the total, compared with the rate of 58 per cent in 1993, 37 per cent in 1998 and 10.8 per cent in 2003.

Vietnam is concentrating on developing poor mountainous and remote areas, border areas and islands, mainly through indirect support such as offering vocational training to local people, directing them ways of doing business, and helping them sell their products, said Ngo Truong Thien, head of the office.

In the 2001-2003 period, the government poured 3 trillion VND (nearly 316.5 million dollars) into poverty reduction projects, which mainly involved in creating jobs, and improving education, healthcare and infrastructure in poor areas, he noted. — MNA/Xinhua

12,000 temporary teachers to be given permanent status in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 2 July — The Nepali Government is preparing to convert the appointment of some 12,000 temporary teachers into permanent status, Minister for Education said here on Friday.

The government will open 2,000 new vacancies for teachers in the country, Minister for Education and Sports Radha Krishna Mainali told reporters.

According to the minister, the government will also build 5,248 more class rooms to cope with the growing pressure of students enrolled during a nationwide campaign launched two months ago.

The government had run the two-week-long campaign beginning from April 15 with a target to enroll 166,000 more school-age children. Presently, there are about 6 million students and 83,000 teachers in 26,000 government schools across the country.

The literacy is about 58 per cent among its total population of 24.8 million. — MNA/Xinhua

Work on China's first satellite for foreign buyer in progress

BEIJING, 2 July — Work on the development, manufacturing and launching of China's first satellite for a foreign buyer is going on smoothly as scheduled, China's major space product supplier and service provider announced here on Friday.

Wang Haibo, president of the China Great Wall Industry Corp, said that preliminary designs of the project passed the evaluation of a panel of experts representing the buyer of the satellite, Nigerian National Space Research Development Agency (NASRDA).

According to contracts signed in December 2004 between the Chinese company and the first one China communications satellite, known as NGCOMSAT-1, will be based on China's latest model of satellite platform, ES-904.

The satellite will be capable of meeting the requirements of Nigeria for telecommunication, broadcasting and broadband multimedia services, said Wang.

The platform is designed to have a lifespan of 15 years and 5, 200 kilos in weight, and the transponders with a designed power of 8 kilowatts will be 800 kilos, he said. To be designed and built in Abar, the capital of Nigeria, by the Chinese firm, and a ground station in Kash in northwest Xinjiang Ughur Autonomouse Region.

Moreover, the Chinese company will offer operating support services and personnel training to Nigerian technicians.

The Chinese company, the international agent of the Italy's Aspero Space Science and Technology Corp. that produces carrier rockets and satellites, was awarded the responsible for training Nigerian technicians.

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Relaxation Zone of Kandawgyi Garden opens

YANGON, 2 July — The Relaxation Zone of Kandawgyi Garden was opened in front of the zone this morning.

Chairman of Work Committee for Upgrading Yangon City Kandawgyi Garden and Zoological Garden (Yangon) Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin formally opened the zone.

Head of Gardens

Minister fixes bolts and nuts at Pyapon Bridge

YANGON, 2 July — Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun oversaw maintenance of road sections and bridges on Yangon-Pathein-Maubin-Hsalamalauk Road yesterday morning.

At milestone No 5/6 on Maubin-Hsalamalauk section, the minister inspected repaving of the road. Maubin District Senior Engineer U Sa Kyaw Moe reported on progress of maintenance tasks.

Minister U Aung Thaung...

Minister Col Zaw Min presents a prize to an outstanding student.

The minister and party went to Minzu model village Basic Education High School and inspected the location of extension hall and scale models. The extension halls will be constructed by Myanmar General and Maintenance Industries.

The minister and party inspected ceramics and steel household items project site (Inraung), Managing Director of Myanmar General and Maintenance Industries U Aye Maik reported on construction of workshops. The minister gave instructions on speedy completion of the project.

The minister also went to the site of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory (Inraung) and inspected implementation of the project, renovation of the pagodas in the compound and offered Shwe Thingans. He inspected the site for construction of houses for pet animals and the main building and related structures.

The minister inspected Win Thuza shop in Kyaukse Township.

A total of 17,816 cooperative...

YANGON, 2 July — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected tasks for the sprucing up of Yangon City this morning.

The commander and the mayor viewed Kyaukkyawdwin overpass project linking North Okkalapa and Mingladon townships. Next, they inspected the unblocking of drains at the junction of Baho Street and Lanhtat Street in Insein Township, the laying of asphalt on Bayinnaung Road in Hlne Township, tarmackling of Strand Road in Kyinmyindine Township. Officials conducted them round the sites.

During the inspection tour, they instructed officials concerned to systematically dredge roadside drains, and to constantly inspect conditions of roads. — MNA

Minister Col Zaw Min presents a prize to an outstanding student. — COOPERATIVES

Tasks for upgrading of Yangon City inspected

YANGON, 2 July — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin inspected tasks for the upgrading of Yangon City.

A total of 17,816 cooperative enterprises have been operating in the nation and all the staff need to cooperate in their respective sectors for achieving the success of production and services, he added.

For the continued development of cooperative enterprises in the entire nation, the 30-year project is being implemented. In the message of the International Co-operatives Day for this year, ‘Microfinance is our business Co-operating out of poverty’ he continued.

In conclusion, the minister urged the credit cooperative societies to strive for enhancing the small loans enterprise and attending to the needs of the members.

Next, Member of Leading Committee for Central Cooperative Society Daw Toe Nandar Tin read out the message sent by the International Co-operatives Federation.

Later, the minister awarded the prizes to the outstanding students of Yangon Cooperative Degree College and Cooperative College (Phaunggyi). — MNA

Minister Col Zaw Min presents a prize to an outstanding student.
**Noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded**

(2-7-2005)

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**MWAF President Daw Than Than Nwe presents cash awards and a basket of flowers to those who contributed services to Myanmar traditional costumes show of successive periods through Patron of Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Thet Htay.**

(News on page 16) — MNA

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**Sports Minister opens X-ray room, Sangha Ward at Thayethamein Station Hospital in Waw Township**

YANGON, 2 July — The X-ray room and Sangha Ward were opened at Thayethamein Station Hospital in Waw Township yesterday morning.

USDA CEC member Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint and the hospital and gave necessary instructions to officials. The minister presented K 300,000 for construction of surgical ward to officials. Next, Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint accepted K 4 million for X-ray room donated by U Kyin Ti and family; K 2.5 million for Sangha Ward by Col Hla Thein (Retd) and family; K 1 million by U Than Myaing and family; and K 3.5 million by local people. Next, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint donated a 21-inch colour TV and an antenna set for the hospital and sports gear, school stationery for local people and books and periodicals to the library to officials.

The X-ray room was built at a cost of K 4.5 million by wellwishers U Kyin Ti and other donors. It is 27 feet long and 20 feet wide building. The X-ray room was installed with modern equipment worth K 2.3 million contributed by the government and locals. Similarly, a Sangha Ward measuring 20 feet by 10 feet was built at a cost of K 4 million by wellwishers.

Afterwards, the minister presented prizes to winners in the Sports Minister’s Cup Inter-Village Soccer Tournament in Thayethamein Village. — MNA

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**Gem merchants visit Jade and Gems Special Sales 2005**

YANGON, 2 July — A total of 1,495 gem merchants from home and abroad attending the Jade and Gems Special Sales 2005 put their tenders into the box today. A wide range of jade lots are being sold through tender, competitive bidding systems and fixed prices till 5 July.

**Canadian AIA club beat Myanmar in soccer friendly**

YANGON, 2 July — Myanmar was defeated by Canada AIA club 2-1 in second match of women’s soccer friendly that took place at Youth Training Centre (Thuwunna) this evening.

Among the spectators were member of Myanmar Olympic Committee Daw Aye Aye and the patrons, officials of Myanmar Football Federation and football fans. Canadian club took the chance of a 2-1 win over Myanmar in the last match of its friendly series.

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(News on page 16) — MNA
**Myanmar Women**

- Ever learned and ever dedicated
- Never disorganized and never discontented
- In the education sector
  - Is the Myanmar teacher.
- Ever caring and ever understanding
- Never neglecting and never demanding
- In the health sector
  - Is the Myanmar lady doctor.
- Ever active and ever energetic
- Never passive and never lethargic
- In the construction sector
  - Is the Myanmar woman engineer.
- Ever imaginative and ever creative
- Never exhausting and never sensitive
- In the literary circle
  - Is the Myanmar woman author.
- Ever amiable and ever shrewd
- Never unreliable and never crude
- In the business sector
  - Is the Myanmar woman entrepreneur.
- Ever composed and ever impartial
- Never biased and never partial
- In the legal sector
  - Is the Myanmar woman judge.
- Ever hardworking and ever obliging
- Never shirking and never dodging
- In the industrial sector
  - Is the Myanmar woman worker.
- Ever loving and ever sacrificing
- Never complaining and never refusing
- In the daily home life
  - Is the Myanmar housewife.

(A Tribute to all Myanmar Women on Myanmar Women’s Day—July 3)
Professor Sein Sein Myint
Dagon University

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**Billboard to mark Myanmar Women’s Day unveiled**

**Yangon**, 2 July — A ceremony to unveil the billboard hailing Myanmar Women’s Day which falls on 3 July was held at the corner of Kaba Aye Pagoda Road and U Hlaun Bo Road in Bahan Township. — **City News**

Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Myo Thu and members, departmental heads, the USDA members, members of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, and officials.

At the auspicious time, MWAF Members Daw Aye Aye Thwin, Daw Khin Than Oo and Chairman of Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Myo Thu formally opened the ceremony.

Next, Dr Daw Khin San Nwe pressed the button to unveil the billboard to mark MWD. — **MNA**

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**Books available at Buddha Dhamma Wellwishers Association**

**Yangon**, 2 July — Buddha Dhamma Wellwishers Association donates basic religious books to Basic Education Primary, Middle and High Schools and Monastic Education Schools throughout the country yearly.

A similar donation will be made for 11th time this year. School heads from the above-mentioned schools are to send letters together with lists of teachers and number of Sayadaws of Monastic Education Schools with their addresses to Buddha Dhamma Wellwishers Association, No 12, Myothit 1st Lane, Tamway Township, Tel: 542236, not later than 30 October. Furthermore, those wishing to donate books and cash may contact the association. — **MNA**
“Myanmar Women’s Day” which falls on the 3rd of July every year is an auspicious day, a day to be proud of by all Myanmar women. It was designated to the day, July 3rd of 1996 to be exact, on which the first-ever Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs (MN CWA) was formed with the main objective for taking the initiative in organizing the mass of Myanmar women to become one in line with the commitment that has been made at Beijing’s Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in the area of women empowerment and advancement.

The Committee had its limitations in undertaking various issues for the entire Myanmar women mass, which eventually led to the formation of a greater organization in order to promote the Myanmar women sector in the country. Accordingly the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation (MWAF) was established on the 20th of December, 2003 for the benefit of the Myanmar women from all walks of life, to stand as the body representing and responsible for the women sector. It was actually an upgrading of the previous Committee since the new set up made it easier, more practical and more efficient to carry out all the related issues regarding the entire Myanmar women mass on a wider scale and with greater perspectives.

MWAF, at present, with its sixteen working groups namely groups on Education, Health, Culture, Economy, Environment, Media, Girl-Child, Violence against Women, Trafficking in Women and Children, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Mobilization, Disciplinary Concerns, Administration and Finance, Nationalities Affairs, International Relations and Legal Affairs, has been trying its utmost to successfully implement its grand and noble objectives.

Then, from the Women’s Conference in Nairobi in 1985 several forward looking strategies especially the strategies on women’s health, came out. Again at the Children’s Rights Summit of New York in 1990, the concept of the girl-child became prominent. Next in 1992, there was the Environment and Development Summit held in Rio de Janeiro which came up with Agenda 21. It was said that because the Agenda 21 had no chapter on women, the NGOs and the women delegates worked together and managed to bring in the chapter on women and the environment. In fact a greater portion of that effort dealt with the health of women.

In 1993 they had the Vienna Summit on human rights, which firmly introduced the concept of women’s rights as human’s rights. So the Vienna Summit can be taken as a milestone in the global vision of the development of women’s empowerment.

Finally we came to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. The conclusion at the meeting stressed on the point that “a revolution has already begun and there is no going back”. Beijing Declaration stated that “Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of Equality, Development, and Peace”. In essence the Beijing Declaration highlighted the paramount importance of women’s empowerment and the proper dispersion of women on the basis of equality in all spheres of society.

Agreement was reached in Beijing that every body should go home with an assignment to meet the commitment that has been made in the area of women empowerment and advancement. Included in the Plan of actions was one for the development of tools for implementation on women and health.

MWAF has its origin traced back directly to Beijing Conference and indirectly to all those summits and meetings that laid down the foundation for the main concern for the betterment of women and their empowerment. Different nations have different social, economic, political and cultural backgrounds, which explain the differences in the ways and means taken in trying to fulfil their commitment and objectives in this area. MWAF in collaboration with other international women organizations and other social organizations, tailor the programmes to the needs of Myanmar women so as to keep up with the international trends and at the same time to safeguard the national interest at all times.

In a way Myanmar women are lucky to say that they have enjoyed equal rights as men and have been keeping abreast of men in the efforts for the progress of their own families, community and for the State, too. MWAF encourages them to keep up this tradition to those womenfolk who missed this chance, particularly those at the grassroots level in the country. MWAF is giving out all the necessary help and assistance in various areas for their protection, for their rights, and for their empowerment. With its notable objectives and the credit-worthy activities, MWAF poses as a source of inspiration and strength for all Myanmar women.

We should take pride in MWAF and give proper recognition to its significant founding day. To all Myanmar women across the nation, let’s all hail the auspicious Myanmar Women’s Day!
Trade in pharmaceutical products grows rapidly in recent years

Since 2000, growth in world exports of pharmaceutical products has been four times stronger on average than the equivalent figures for other chemical products and manufactured goods, as a whole, said the report.

“The share of pharmaceuticals in world trade has risen to some $200 billion US dollars, or 3 per cent of total trade. This share exceeds those of textiles and iron and steel,” the report said.

Trade in pharmaceuticals takes place largely among developed countries, who account for 90 per cent of world exports and more than 80 per cent of world imports.

Developed countries dominate research and development activity, enjoy a high level of intra-industry and intra-firm trade, and high levels of health expenditures compared to developing countries, the report explained.

According to the report, a number of factors explain the expansion of the pharmaceutical industry.

“One is strong demand growth in rich countries, stimulated by an ageing population and increased use of ‘lifestyle’ drugs. Another is corporate consolidation resulting in more specialization and more intra-industry and intra-firm trade,” the report explained.

UN offers free tours

UNITED NATIONS, 1 July—In an effort to increase awareness among people of its work, the United Nations has offered nearly 9,000 free Sunday tours to its headquarters in New York coinciding celebration of 60th anniversary of its foundation.

With the support of the UN Foundations, 8,700 visitors the number of tourists we would normally have expected at Sundays in June — now know more about their United Nations, Under-secretary-General for Communications and Public Information Shashi Tharoor said on Tuesday.

“This promotion was a wonderful start to our anniversary year... People emerged from the tours with a better understanding of how the United Nations tackles pressing issues and promotes global understanding,” he said.

Organized by the Department of Public Information’s Outreach Division, guided tours offer a direct link between the UN and the general public.

One day, 60 multimedia guides help members of the public better understand the world body, with stops in the Security Council Chamber and the General Assembly Hall and information about the premises and UN work.

China, EU sign joint declaration of aviation cooperation

BEIJING, 1 July—China and the European Union signed a joint declaration of aviation cooperation on Thursday.

The declaration, called bilateral aviation development cooperation, especially last year after the EU became the tourist destination for Chinese citizens as well as the biggest market for travel agents for China.

China and the EU have 150 direct flights per week, according to the report.

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Venezuela, Caribbean nations sign oil cooperation agreement

CARACAS, 1 July—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the leaders of 13 Caribbean countries signed an agreement on the creation of a regional oil initiative called Petrocaribe on Wednesday.

The accord came at the First Caribbean Energy Summit in Puerto La Cruz, 330 kilometres east of the Venezuelan capital Caracas. It was proposed by Chavez with the aim of promoting regional energy cooperation and helping the Caribbean nations to overcome difficulties caused by rising oil prices.

The new Petrocaribe is a regional organization aiming to strengthen energy cooperation. It will be responsible for exporting Venezuela’s oil to the Caribbean countries cheaply and accepting payment in a more flexible form.

The Venezuelan state-owned company will also create a new affiliate to deliver fuel and oil directly to those nations.

Chavez said at the one-day meeting that as a country with rich oil resources, Venezuela is willing to share with them the Caribbean countries.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro hailed the proposal as an important step toward regional energy integration. Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago did not sign the document due to their differences.

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Drive safely

Asian tourists near the Eiffel Tower recently. Chinese tourists are now counted as the seventh biggest group of ticket buyers to climb the Paris landmark. —INTERNET

Putin signs resolution on Year of Russia in China in 2006

MOSCOW, 1 July—Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed on Wednesday a resolution to hold the Year of Russia in China in 2006 and the Year of China in Russia in 2007, according to reports from the Presidential Press Service.

The resolution was signed by Putin on the eve of a state visit by Chinese President Hu Jintao to Russia.

According to the resolution, the organizing committee will be led by presidential chief of staff Dmitry Medvedev. The decision to hold the Year of Russia in China and the Year of China in Russia was made by the leaders of the two countries during Putin’s visit to China in October 2004, said a source from the Chinese Embassy in Russia.

The Russian Presidential Press Service has not disclosed what activities will be held during the two years. — MNA/Xinhua
World air cargo volume falls in May amid oil price rises

London, 1 July — The volume of global air cargo fell in May for the second month this year amid recent hikes of oil prices, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

“The slowdown in cargo traffic demonstrates that the high price of oil is slowing the global economy faster than expected,” IATA chief executive Giovanni Bisignani was quoted as saying on Thursday.

According to the IATA, air freight traffic declined by 1.6 per cent year-on-year in May but overall growth of 3.1 per cent was registered in the first five months of this year.

Regions such as Asia Pacific, Europe, North and Latin Americas all saw a decline in freight volumes, with only Africa and the Middle East still showing growth. Bisignani warned that the IATA forecast of a six-billion-US-dollar global loss for the industry this year, the fifth successive annual loss, seems likely to come to pass.

After recent rises, crude oil futures fell heavily on Wednesday as a surprise increase in US crude and petrol inventories dragged prices down by nearly one dollar. The oil price is currently about 6 per cent below record highs of Monday.

Air freight accounts for 40 per cent of world trade volumes by value and is regarded as a leading indicator of the state of the world economy.

The crude oil prices hit a record 60 dollars a barrel this month. — MNA/Xinhua

NASA sets 13 July for “Discovery” launch

Washington, 1 July — NASA set on Thursday 13 July for the launch of Discovery on the first flight mission since the Columbia disaster in 2003.

NASA Administrator Michael Griffin announced the decision after a two-day meeting of the US space agency to review Discovery’s flight readiness. The planned launch window is 13 to 31 July.

“Based on a very thorough and very successful flight readiness review, we’re currently ‘go’ for launch of Discovery on 13 July,” Griffin said.

The decision was made three days after the expert panel overseeing NASA’s return-to-flight preparations concluded that NASA has failed to meet three of the 15 safety recommendations put forth by investigators of the Columbia accident.

The panel said NASA has not eliminated the possibility of debris falling off the external fuel tank and striking the shuttle on lift-off. In addition, NASA has not managed sufficiently to toughen the shuttle’s shell in order to resist damages from striking, and has failed to develop the capability to make emergency repairs in space.

However, NASA officials and panel members consider the risk level as acceptable.

NASA has grounded its shuttle fleet since the Columbia disaster in February 2003, in which all seven astronauts aboard were killed. — MNA/Xinhua

Snowstorm leaves one dead, four missing in S Argentina

Buenos Aires, 1 July — Days of heavy snowstorm in south Argentina has killed one people and left four missing, police said on Thursday.

The missing are a teacher and three children, who were seen for the last time on Tuesday in Neuquen Province.

The storm also has isolated several places, damaged rural roads and led to blackouts.

Cristo Redentor tunnel, one of the main links between Argentina and Chile, in Mendoza Province, was closed due to bad weather, affecting the movement of over 2,000 trucks.

Due to the closing of the tunnel, two drivers were frozen to death while awaiting at a crossing point. — MNA/Xinhua

Smoking-related deaths cost $92b in productivity loss

Washington, 1 July — Early deaths from smoking led to an annual productivity loss of 92 billion US dollars between 1997 and 2001 in the United States, the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported on Thursday.

During the period, an estimated 438,000 premature deaths occurred each year as a result of smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke, in comparison to 440,000 a year between 1995 and 1999. The CDC said smoking reduces adult life expectancy by an average of 14 years.

Despite the slow steady declines in the US smoking population, cigarette smoking still causes hundreds of thousands of preventable deaths each year, the CDC said. The figure of overall smoking-related health care costs for the 1997-2001 period is not available, but it was 75.5 billion dollars for 1998 alone.

“Cigarette smoking continues to impose substantial health and financial costs on individuals and society,” CDC Director Dr. Julie Gerberding said in a statement. “If we want to significantly reduce the toll in this decade, we must provide the 32 million smokers who say they want to quit with the tools and support to do so successfully,” she added. — MNA/Xinhua

Global cell phone production accelerates in second quarter

Los Angeles, 1 July — Global production of mobile phones will reach 180.5 million units in the second quarter, up 4 per cent from the first quarter or 7.1 per cent from a year earlier, Suppli said on Thursday.

After suffering the typical seasonal slowdown in the first three months of the year, mobile-phone unit production will rise sequentially in the second quarter and for the remainder of 2005, said Suppli, a leading market intelligence firm.

Mobile-phone production in the first quarter of 2005 amounted to 173 million units, down 13 per cent from 200 million in the fourth quarter of 2004. It predicted that mobile phone shipments will rise 5.3 per cent sequentially in the third quarter to 190 million and 8.4 per cent in the fourth quarter to 206 million.

The company said that after rising 25 per cent in 2004, mobile phone unit production growth will taper off this year, with production rising to 750 million units in 2005, up about 5 per cent from 713 million in 2004. — MNA/Xinhua

Greece, Turkey sign trade cooperation documents

Athens, 1 July — Greece and Turkey on Thursday signed a memorandum of cooperation on commercial and trade affairs at the conclusion of a two-day inter-ministerial council meeting in Athens.

An agreement on patent and standardization between the relevant Greek and Turkish agencies was also signed on the sidelines of the meeting, a pact that foresees the exchange of know-how in the related area. The documents were also signed to promote cooperation between the state-run Greek telephone service provider OTE and the Turk Telecom, and between Hellenic Railways and Turkish Rail for upgrading the Thessaloniki-Istanbul route. The Turkish delegation was headed by Foreign Trade Undersecretary Tuncer Kayalar.

“Signs of overall smoking-related

China workers unveil the construction buses during the ground breaking ceremony of a badminton gymnasium for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing on June 30, 2005. — MNA/Xinhua

Singer Jon Bon Jovi, left, guitarist Richie Sambora and keyboard player David Bryan perform during a sound check on the main stage for the Live 8 concert in Philadelphia, on 1 July. — MNA/Xinhua

Chinese workers unveil the construction buses during the ground breaking ceremony of a badminton gymnasium for the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing on June 30, 2005. — MNA/Xinhua

Internet
Japan to meet Ukraine in October friendly

Tokyo, 2 July— Asian Cup champions Japan will get a chance to test themselves against a possible World Cup opponent when they take on Ukraine in an international friendly on 12 October.

Having sealed their passage to their third consecutive World Cup appearance in Germany next year, Zico's side are being lined up for a series of warm-up matches, which includes a two-match tour of Eastern Europe later this year with matches in Latvia and Ukraine.

The Japanese will take on Latvia on 8 October, four days before the mouth-watering clash with the Ukrainians, who are on the verge of their first ever appearance in football's biggest international tournament.

The former Soviet republic, who are led by current European Player of the Year Andriy Shevchenko of Italian giants AC Milan, hold a seven-point lead in Group 2 ahead of the likes of reigning European champions Greece and 2002 World Cup semi finalists Turkey.

They only need three points from their three remaining matches to book their ticket in Germany.

Meanwhile, Latvia are still in the running for a World Cup spot although it would be a tall order for the world’s 64th ranked side, who are currently fourth in a tough Group 3 that features Portugal and Russia.

According to the Daily Yomiuri, Japan Football Association president Saburo Kawabuchi has suggested that Japan could also play warm-up friendlies at home against yet-to-be-determined opponents in September and November.

Japan also have one game remaining in the 2006 World Cup Asian qualifiers, a Group B home tie with Iran on August 17. Both sides have already claimed the group's two automatic World Cup spots after victories against Bahrain and North Korea in early June.

MNA/Xinhua

Federer beats Hewitt 3-0 to reach Wimbledon final

London, 2 July— Top seed Roger Federer relentlessly devastated Lleyton Hewitt 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) in a nailbiting Centre Court semi final demolition on Friday to move within only one win off a hat-trick of titles.

The 23-year-old world number one from Switzerland will face the winner between last year's runner-up Andy Roddick, the American second seed, and Thomas Johansson, the 12th seed from Sweden, in Sunday's final.

The win was Federer's third successive win on grass with his last defeat on the surface coming at the hands of Mario Ancic on Centre Court in 2002, the year that Hewitt won the title.

It was also Federer's eighth win in a row over the Australian, a run stretching back to the Davis Cup semi finals in 2003 when Hewitt fought back from a two-set deficit.

Hewitt had come into the semifinal still simmering with resentment over being seeded three instead of two which would have been in line with his world ranking and would have kept him away from Federer until the final.

Federer struck first breaking Hewitt to lead 2-0 before the Australian hit back immediately but the Swiss then edged ahead to 5-3 when he played a sweetly-timed backhand which the Australian could only guide into the net.

The top seed got to set point with his third ace and took the opener after just 36 minutes when Hewitt again netted a service return.

The 24-year-old Hewitt struggled to match Federer's change of pace and trademark accuracy and angles.

He went down a break to trail 4-2 in the second set and when Federer held to lead 5-3, the champion had dropped just two points on his serve.

The Australian saved a set point in the ninth game but he was powerless to prevent Federer from clinching the second set when he was run out wide by another searing forehand and could only steer his reply into the net. Federer made just two unforced errors in the second set as Hewit'silWimbledon dream began to unravel after only 70 minutes of action.

The Australian gamely saved two break points in the fifth game of the third set and would have carved out a break point lifeline in the following game had umpire Pascal Maria not overruled a linesman who had called a Federer forehand long.

Hewitt was playing his best tennis but was unable to prevent the tiebreak in which Federer inched towards two match points. —MNA/Xinhua

Maxi Rodriguez arrives to sign with Atletico

Madrid, 1 July— Argentine midfielder Maxi Rodriguez arrived Thursday evening at Madrid to complete his transfer for three seasons with Atletico Madrid, after the agreement reached between Espanyol and Atletico, for some 5.0 million euros.

"I am quite happy. I've had a very long trip and now I don't want to speak. Let's do it tomorrow," said the Argentine player on arrival at Madrid's Barajas Airport, where he was awaited by his representative Arturo Canales and an executive of Atletico Madrid.

The player who has been with Espanyol in the past three seasons, having scored 15 goals last season, arrived in Madrid coming from Germany where he played the Confederations Cup.

MNA/Xinhua

Beijing sets up Olympic security command centre

Beijing, 1 July— Beijing on Thursday set up its security command centre for the 2008 Olympic Games.

Qiang Wei, head of the Beijing Olympic Security Coordination Group, said the launch of the command centre and an intelligence centre marks the official operation of Beijing's Olympic security plan.

Beijing attaches great importance to the security of the 2008 Games as it has carried out cooperation with many countries that hosted previous Olympic Games. —MNA/Xinhua

Swedish Thomas Johansson serves to Andy Roddick of the US in their men's singles semi-final match at the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, on 1 July, 2005. —INTERNET

Crossword puzzle

Across
1 Bill of fare
2 Nigard
4 Fairly recent
5 Effusive
6 Rise above, surpass
7 Abided
8 Gratia
11 Gear
13 Notice of discharge from employment
14 Risk
16 Conceded
18 Water-store
20 Counterfeit (sl)
22 Positive declarations
23 Rigid
25 Unnecessary
26 Pleaseed

Down
1 Niggard
2 Pen-point
3 Dubbed
4 Fairly recent
5 Effusive
6 Rise above, surpass
7 Abided
8 Gratia
10 Loss by decay
11 Gear
12 Statesman four times prime minister
14 Sure
15 Cut short
17 Knights' tournaments
19 Repose
21 Welsh county
24 Ailing

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Frenchman Ladji Doucoure (R) competes next to American Dominique Arnold (C) and Chinese Liu Xiang during the men's 110m hurdles at the Golden Games as it has carried out cooperation with many countries that
Jordan devoted to helping Palestinian people

AMMAN, 2 July—Jordanian King Abdullah II said here on Thursday that his country was devoted to assisting the Palestinian people and lobbying global supports for the peace process that will restore their legitimate rights.

Abdullah made the remarks earlier in the day during his meeting with visiting Palestinian top-level delegation led by President Mahmoud Abbas.

During the meeting, the King underscored the necessity of solidarity among all Palestinian political forces for the sake of their fair cause, urging for unifying all energies of the Palestinian people in the service of their hopes and aspirations.

The Jordanian monarch pledged to maintain support for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in its efforts to reconstruct the security and civil institutions and to ensure stability and security for the Palestinian people in Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

"The coming stage is crucial and bears great challenges," he said, adding "therefore, the Palestinians must make concerted efforts towards their constitutional construction, as a prelude to their future independent viable state.

"The broad disengagement from Gaza Strip should be a first step of a complete withdrawal from the West Bank as well, in line with the roadmap and international legitimacy," Abdullah added.

Abbas, for his part, said that the meeting with King Abdullah reflects the strength and depth of relations between the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples.

"Jordan, which plays host for this important event, showed keenness to unify the Palestinian efforts and evolve a single internal and external position in this crucial period," Abbas said.

WEATHER

Saturday, 2 July, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayah State and lower Sagaing Division, rain has been isolated in Shan, Chin States and Mandalay Division, scattered in Kachin State, Upper Sagaing, Magway and Yangon Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with locally heavyfall in Rakhine State. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Sittway (9.65) inches, Kyaukpyu (8.11) inches, Maungtaw (6.25) inches, Ann (3.94) inches, Thandwe (3.85) inches, Kyauktaw (3.42) inches and Mawlamyine (2.20) inches.

Maximum temperature on 1-7-2005 was 84°F. Minimum temperature on 2-7-2005 was 67°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 2-7-2005 was 96%. Total sunshine hours on 1-7-2005 was (0.8) hour approx. Rainfalls on 2-7-2005 were (0.32) inch at Mingaladon, (0.63) inch at Kaba-Aye and (0.94) inch at central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were (30.20) inches at Mingaladon, (26.69 inches) at Kaba-Aye and (27.36) inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba- Aye) was (5) mph from West at (13:35) hours MST on 1-7-2005.

Bay influence: Monsoon is generally strong in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 3-7-2005: Rain will be isolated in Kayah State, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, scattered in Kachin, Shan and Chin States, Upper Sagaing Division and widespread in the remaining areas with likelihood of isolated heavyfall in Rakhine State. Degree of certainty is 80%.

State of the sea: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times off and along Rakhine Coast. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) mph. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally strong monsoon.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 3-7-2005: Some rain. Degree of certainty is 80%.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 3-7-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).
YANGON, 2 July — As a gesture of hailing the Myanmar Women’s Day which falls on 3 July 2005, a ceremony to put newly sunk 8-inch diameter tubewell into service was held in the compound of new Yangon General Hospital at the junction of Pyay Road and Bogyoke Aung San Street, here, this morning.

Member of the Panel of Patrons of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (Central) Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, and CEC member Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin cut the ribbon to put the tubewell into service.

Also present on the occasion were CEC member Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa and officials.

Later, Dr Daw Hla Kyin expressed thanks. The tubewell was jointly sunk by Yangon Division PDC and Yangon Division USDA.

The commander and the mayor inspected pumping out of 8,000 gallons of water per hour and water quality. The ceremony to mark the opening of the tubewell was held at the hospital.

The commander delivered an address and presented K 4.2 million for the cost of tubewell and Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, K 900,000 and related documents related to Medical Superintendent Dr Daw Hla Kyin. Later, certificates of honour were presented to the wellwishers.

On behalf of the staff, the medical superintendent handed over 240 USDA membership applications to the CEC member mayor who presented membership cards to her.

Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa inspect quality of water from the new tubewell. CITY NEWS

MWAF President Daw Than Than Nwe, MMCWA President Daw Khin Khin Win and party enjoy traditional costume fashion show. — MNA

Prime Minister sends message of felicitations to Belarus counterpart

YANGON, 3 July — General Soe Win, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr Sergey Sidorsky, Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus, on the occasion of the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus which falls on 3 July 2005. — MNA

Costumes of successive periods shown off to mark Myanmar Women’s Day

YANGON, 2 July — As a gesture of hailing Myanmar Women’s Day which falls on 3 July, supervised by Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, the fashion show of Myanmar women’s costumes of successive periods took place at National Theatre on Myoma Kyauk Street in Dagon Township this afternoon.

Present on the occasion were members of the panel of patrons of MWAF, President of MWAF Daw Than Than Nwe, President of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Daw Khin Khin Win, Vice-President of MWAF Daw Khin Lay Myint, the general secretary and officials, Patron of Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Htay, the patrons of State/Division WAOs and others.

The artistes entertained those present with the songs. The Myanmar damsels showed off the costumes of successive eras as Pyu, Bagan, Inwa, Konbaung, Amarapura and Yadanaabon.

Women vocalists presented variety of songs. Next, Myanmar belles staged a fashion show in traditional costumes of Pre-War, Post-War and Independence eras. At the interval, women vocalists entertained the audience with songs. Afterwards, the belles demonstrated fashion show or current modes of dress.

President Daw Than Than Nwe presented cash award and bouquet to Patron of Yangon Division Organization for Women’s Affairs Daw Khin Htay and the show ended. — MNA

INSIDE

Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of Equality, Development, and Peace. — AYE PHYE

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