Serious attention to be paid to ensuring success in water supply as arid zone greening and water supply tasks directly benefit the people.

Prime Minister General Soe Win inspects progress of building Myitnge Bridge between Singaing and Amarapura Township on Yangon-Mandalay Six-lane Union Highway. — MNA

YANGON, 18 Aug — Prime Minister General Soe Win, accompanied by Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Mandalay Division PDC Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, ministers, deputy ministers, the Mandalay Mayor and officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, arrived MICT Park on third floor of Yadana Bon Market in Mandalay on 16 August morning. They were welcomed by Deputy Commander of Central Command Brig-Gen Nay Win, heads of department, members of the board of directors from Mandalay MICT Development Corporation Ltd.

At the hall of MICT Park, Chairman of Mandalay MICT Development Corporation Ltd U Thein Htut extended greetings that Mandalay MICT Park was opened on 16 August 2003. He expressed thanks for attendance of the Prime Minister on the second anniversary of the Park. Next, he briefed the Prime Minister on measures being taken for development of Mandalay MICT Park.

Next, the Prime Minister cordially greeted members of the board of directors. At the meeting hall,

(See page 16)
Work for national unity and national development

The Union of Myanmar is home to many national races and they have been living in unity and amity in the Union for ages. Though the names of the national races might vary, they have a long tradition of living through thick and thin. And they have been able to do so because Union Spirit binds them together.

During his tour of Sagaing Division on 15 August, Prime Minister General Soe Win met with the rector, pro-rectors, heads of department, professors, lecturers and assistant lecturers at the meeting hall of the university. At the meeting, the Prime Minister said that it was very important for Union Spirit to flourish among the national races and that, in addition to teaching respective subjects, the faculty members were to inculcate the students with a strong conception of development of national races and Union Spirit and only with this spirit will the national brethren be able to live in unity and amity, keeping eggs and nest intact.

Due to the nurturing of the government, the support of local authorities and the efforts of the successive heads of the university, the University for Development of National Races has been in continuous existence since 1964. The University for Development of National Races has been constantly turning out educated youths of national races, good teachers and organizers who can actively take part in national development endeavours.

Teachers, especially the products of the University for Development of National Races, are required to lend themselves to regional and national development endeavours, including development plans for rural and border areas, together with local people and social organizations.

We believe that the teachers who have graduated for the University for Development of National Races will try to the best of their abilities to become not only good teachers but also good organizers who can further consolidate the national unity, widen the horizons of national races and bring about their development.
Hello Kitty designer Yuko Yamaguchi poses with a ‘Fairy Hello Kitty’ at an exhibition called ‘Hide and Seek’ during the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Japanese cartoon character in Hong Kong, on 17 August, 2005.

INTERNET

SIA prefers compensation for delivery delay of “A380”

SINGAPORE, 17 Aug—To be compensated by Airbus for the eight-month delivery delay of its first A380 aircraft is Singapore Airlines’ (SIA) preferred option up to now, SIA’s vice-president for public affairs Stephen Forsbach said on Tuesday.

According to Channel NewsAsia, SIA, the first customer of the largest commercial aircraft ever built, "has not ruled out a lawsuit against the plane manufacturers" while having compensation talks with it.

SIA might ask for over six million US dollars, said the report.

As A380 plane has 555 seats, which is 30 per cent more than a Boeing 747-400. SIA said that it has to expand the leases on some of the Boeing 747s to deal with high passenger loads during the period of the delay. SIA has ordered 10 A380 planes, together with another 15 on option. The first delivery was scheduled in March 2006. In early June this year, Airbus confirmed the delay of the delivery of its super-jumbo jet for no specific reason.—MNA/Xinhua

Saudi Arabia plans to ease restrictions on tourist visas next year

DUBAI, 17 Aug—Saudi Arabia is planning to issue tourist visas to all visitors from early next year regardless of their religion as it implements a liberalized visa regime to gain entry into the World Trade Organization.

The move is also part of the oil-rich kingdom’s efforts to boost tourist inflow.

The Saudi Arabian Foreign Ministry plans to issue tourist visas to Muslims as well as non-Muslims from February 2006. Muslim tourists will get visas to visit both religious places and tourist spots, a media report said Tuesday. Muslim women visiting the country must have a legal companion while non-Muslim women should have a sponsor in order to get visas, the Arab News reported. Prince Sultan bin Salman, secretary-general of the Supreme Commission for Tourism, said the tourist visa project was in the final stages and would come into effect in a few months.

The kingdom has set up a committee comprising representatives of various government departments to work out mechanisms for issuing business and tourist visas at airports, it said.

Abdul Rahman Al-Jeraisy, chairman of the Council of Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, hoped that the panel would make recommendations to enable businessmen and tourists to get visas at airports. The Foreign Ministry issued 5,537 tourist visas this year to Americans, Europeans and Africans under the Saudi Arabian Airlines’ “Discover Saudi Arabia” package.—MNA/PTI

China’s fixed assets investment up 27.2% in first seven months

BEIJING, 17 Aug—China's investment in fixed assets stood at 3,463.7 billion yuan (about 428 billion US dollars) in the first seven months of this year, up 27.2-per-cent year-on-year, according to a monthly report released on Tuesday by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The fixed assets investment for July alone increased by 27.7 per cent over the same month last year, representing 1.1 percentage points lower than in June. According to the report, during the January-July period, the investment by the state-owned and other state-related entities reached 1,744.4 billion yuan (215 billion US dollars), a rise of 10.8-per-cent year-on-year.

The investment in primary, secondary and tertiary industries rose by 17.7 per cent, 35.4 per cent, and 21.9 per cent respectively, the report says.

The report also reveals an 83.2-per-cent growth of investment in coal mining and dressing, which reached 45.5 billion yuan (5.62 billion US dollars).

Meanwhile, investment in petroleum and natural gas was up 28.6 per cent to 65.5 billion yuan (8.09 billion US dollars), while investment in oil processing, coking and nuclear fuel processing was up 15.1 per cent to 36.1 billion yuan (4.46 billion US dollars).

China's fixed assets investment in the first half year was 3,289.5 billion yuan (406 billion US dollars), a year-on-year increase of 25.4 per cent.—MNA/Xinhua

Helicopter gunfire wounds 25 Iraqi workers

BAGHDAD, 17 Aug—At least 25 workers were wounded on Tuesday by what appeared to be helicopter fire as some slept on the roof of a central Baghdad hotel, and the US military said it was investigating the incident.

"The helicopter shot at the hotel three times," Rahim al-Ta’ie, a worker who said he witnessed the attack, told Reuters. He said some of the wounded men were having breakfast on the street below in the open air at the time, which he put at between 0500 (0100 GMT) and 0530 in the morning. A Reuters cameraman at the scene saw blood spattered around the rooftop of the low-rise hotel, situated in the poor Allawi District of the capital.

Police told Reuters at least 25 men were wounded.

The men, who were taken to three hospitals, refused to say who they thought had fired on them or could not speak because they were being treated for wounds, mostly in the legs.

Four US soldiers later arrived at the Yarmuk Hospital to investigate the incident, checking the conditions of the workers and registering their names. They told a Reuters cameraman that they could not confirm if US troops were involved.

"We can't confirm anything at this stage. We're looking into it to see what precisely happened," US military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Steve Boylan later said. "All we've got at this stage are reports we've heard about labourers being shot." An attack on a US military patrol followed by US gunfire last Saturday left 15 Iraqis dead and 17 wounded in the town of Ramadi west of Baghdad, residents said. The US military said it was not responsible.—MNA/Reuters

Families in High Court fight for Iraq war inquiry

LONDON, 18 Aug—The families of seventeen British soldiers killed in the Iraq war, and one who committed suicide after returning home, began a legal challenge yesterday in an attempt to force the Government into holding an independent public inquiry into the legality of the conflict.

Lawyers formally lodged papers at the High Court seeking a judicial review of the Government’s refusal in May to order an inquiry. They are seeking an urgent preliminary hearing so that the review can be held before the end of the year.

Phil Shiner, the families’ solicitor, wants an inquiry that will cross-examine the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General, Geoff Hoon, the former Defence Secretary, and Jack Straw, the Foreign Secretary.

The families argue that, under human rights laws, if the State is involved in the use of lethal force, there must be an independent inquiry. The court will also be asked to decide the remit of any inquiry.

Among the questions raised by the families is ‘why the equivocal advice of 7 March, 2003, from the Attorney-General, Lord Goldsmith, changed so that ten days later it was completely unequivocal in giving legal support for the war?’.—Internet

An Iraqi woman sits with her grandson, who was injured by a car bomb which killed two and wounded nine, at the Al Fallujah Hospital in Fallujah, 50 km (32 miles) west of Baghdad, on 17 August, 2005.—INTERNET
**China ready to authenticate all foreign degrees, diplomas**

**BEIJING, 17 Aug**—China’s Ministry of Education (MOE) has begun to offer authentication services for all foreign degrees and diplomas so that Chinese employers can verify the academic credentials of job applicants.

The MOE can now authenticate degrees and diplomas received from overseas higher educational institutions and schools. The MOE can now authenticate degrees and diplomas from any country as long as the institutions of higher learning are included in the an MOE list of acknowledged overseas schools.

The official says students can log onto the MOE’s website to complete the authenticating process, which is more efficient. Under the previous mechanism, students had to submit written text to the MOE or through visits and calls for authentication.

According to the MOE, before the end of 2004, 6,000 students had their degrees notarized. Authentication is normally required by most employers.

Chinese students often seek advice on the validity of degrees issued by overseas schools before they go abroad to avoid fraud.

Since 1978, more than 400,000 Chinese students have studied abroad, with more than 100,000 coming back to the country in the last two decades.

**Two US soldiers killed in Iraq in separate incidents**

**WASHINGTON, 17 Aug**—Two US soldiers were killed in Iraq in the last two days.

A Task Force Baghdad soldier died when his patrol struck an improvised explosive device in southwest Baghdad on 16 August. On 15 August, a Task Force Freedom soldier was killed by gunfire while conducting security operations in central Baghdad. Guerillas also employed small arms fire as they drove by his position in a civilian vehicle.

Guerillas also attacked a Task Force Baghdad patrol in central Baghdad on 16 August. In the ensuing fight, US helicopters tracked and engaged the guerillas, and resulted in an undefined number of civilian casualties.

Multinational Force Iraq officials expressed regret over any civilian loss of life or injuries. In other news from Iraq, a mechanical problem forced a Task Force Baghdad helicopter to make a precautionary landing in southwest Baghdad on 17 August.

**HK to issue special stamps to mark opening of Disneyland**

**HONG KONG, 17 Aug**—A set of special stamps would be issued to mark the grand opening of Hong Kong Disneyland on 12 September, 2005, Hong Kong Postmaster General Allan Chiang announced on Monday.

Hongkong Post will issue a set of four commemorative stamps, a souvenir sheet, a stamp sheetlet and a gold-foiled stamp sheetlet on 12 September.

A Souvenir Pack will also be available, containing a set of the "Hong Kong Disneyland" stamps issued in 2003 to commemorate the groundbreaking, together with a set of the new "Hong Kong Disneyland Grand Opening" stamps and a gold-foiled stamp sheetlet.

Chinese students often seek advice on the validity of degrees issued by overseas schools before they go abroad to avoid fraud.

Since 1978, more than 400,000 Chinese students have studied abroad, with more than 100,000 coming back to the country in the last two decades.

**Anti-war demonstrators move nearer to Bush**

**CRAWFORD, 18 Aug**—Anti-war demonstrators led by the mother of a soldier killed in Iraq will move their campsite closer to President Bush’s Texas ranch.

The new site, offered by a sympathetic landowner, is a mile from Bush’s Crawford home. The move comes after the President’s neighbours complained about sanitation and traffic problems.

The landowner is a relative of the rancher who fired shots into the air Sunday, saying he was preparing for a military action, according to the military’s numbers. The protesters plan to move “Camp Casey” to Mattlage’s property on Thursday and Friday.

Demonstrators have said they won’t leave until the commander in chief meets with Sheehan.

Sheehan, founder of Gold Star Families for Peace, is demanding a meeting with Bush in hopes of asking the President what her son Casey died to achieve and to press for a US troop withdrawal from Iraq.

The protesters plan to move “Camp Casey” to Mattlage’s property on Thursday and Friday.

Demonstrators have said they won’t leave until the commander in chief meets with Sheehan.

**Singapore to install crash barriers at land checkpoints**

**SINGAPORE, 17 Aug**—Singapore will install crash barriers at land checkpoints later this year, Singapore’s Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) expects the installation to help “stop vehicles that do not halt for immigration and security clearance”.

As terrorism and transnational crimes remain a global threat, Singapore has been enhancing the security measures at its land checkpoints in the past few months.

**1,860 US soldiers killed in Iraq**

**WASHINGTON, 17 Aug**—As of Wednesday, 17 Aug, 2005, at least 1,860 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 1,440 died as a result of hostile action, according to the military’s numbers. The figures include five military civilians.

The AP’s count is six higher than the Defense Department’s tally, last updated at 10 am EDT Wednesday.

The British military has reported 93 deaths; Italy, 26; Ukraine, 18; Poland, 17; Bulgaria, 13; Spain, 11; Slovakia, three; El Salvador, Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, Hungary, Kazakhstan and Latvia one death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,721 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 1,331 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

Since the start of US military operations in Iraq, 14,021 US servicemembers have been wounded, according to a Defence Department tally released Tuesday.
China to open air market wider to overseas airlines

GUYANG, 17 Aug — China will further open its air market and promote flight right reforms to invite more overseas airlines into western China, said Yang Guoqing, vice director of the General Administration of Civil Aviation of China (CAAC) on Monday.

He made the remarks at the 20th forum on economic cooperation among six provinces, regions and municipality in southwestern China. The two-day forum closed Monday in Guyang, capital of southwest China’s Guizhou Province.

“As long as overseas airlines are willing to open to flights to western China cities, we (CAAC) won’t have flight right limitations, and the domestic airlines are also welcome since many other measures are tailor-made for them,” Yang said.

Meanwhile, the air market in the Pan-Pearl River areas will open to the low-cost airlines in the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) countries to boost tourism cooperation, Yang said.

The air market in southwestern China has been booming in recent years. Air passengers increased by 34.9 per cent in 2004 from the previous year in the six provinces, regions and municipality, according to statistics from the CAAC.

One feared dead in rail tunnel fire in S Britain

LONDON, 17 Aug — One person was feared dead and another was seriously injured on Tuesday in a train fire on a high-speed railway line being built between London and the Anglo-French undersea link, emergency services said.

More than 50 firefighters were called to the blaze on a construction train in a section of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), a 68-mile line, in Kent, southeast of London.

“The fire has been brought under control,” a Kent Fire and Rescue Service spokesman said. “One person has been taken to hospital with burns.” He said a search was under way for a second person who was believed to have died in the tunnel. — MNA/Reuters

Russia, India sign $350m aircraft engine deal

ZHKOVSKY (Russia), 17 Aug — India and Russia on Tuesday signed a 350-million US dollars deal for the joint development, production and marketing of a new aircraft engine for use on the Intermediate Jet Trainers HJT-36 and HJT-39 developed and built by Indians.

The deal was signed by the Chairman of Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), Ashok Baweja, and Director General of Rosoboronexport State Corporation, Sergei Chemezov, in the presence of Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Ambassador to Moscow Kanwal Sibal and Russian Defence Minister Sergei Ivanov, immediately after the inauguration of International Aerospace Show MAKS-2005 here.

Putin, who arrived here on board a special helicopter, immediately after formally inaugurating the air show went straight to the Rosoboronexport Chalet to bless the signing of the Indo-Russian deal with his presence, signifying the importance attached by the Kremlin to defence cooperation with New Delhi.

Under the general contract signed Tuesday, HAL will initially produce 250 AL-35 jets engines and would have right to produce 1,000 more. The inter-governmental agreement on licensed production of the engine is scheduled to be signed in New Delhi on 18 August.

The Russian engine developed by NPO Saturn scientific-production enterprise is first of its kind to be seriously produced in Russia and India, General Designer Alexander Sarkisov told PTI on the sideline of the air show.

“It would replace French Larsen engines in 2008 currently being used in HJT-36 prototype,” Sarkisov said.

“The Indian side has chosen our engine as the result of a convincing victory over European manufacturers in the tender for engine project for the prospective HJT-36 and latest HJT-36 trainer jets developed by HAL for the Indian Air Force,” he said.

Indonesian President points to peace, economic challenges

JAKARTA, 17 Aug — Indonesia’s President pointed with pride on Tuesday to efforts to bring peace to tsunami-devastated Aceh Province but warned of economic challenges ahead for the world’s fourth most populous nation.

Indonesia and Free Aceh Movement (GAM) rebels signed a peace agreement on Monday aimed at ending nearly three decades of war in the province.

The government places hope that the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with GAM will become the starting point for a permanent conflict settlement in Aceh, “Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono told Parliament. In the annual presidential address ahead of Indonesia’s 17 August Independence Day, Yudhoyono said a history marked by the sorrow of the civil war “became even more dreadful when a devastating earthquake and tsunami waves struck Aceh”.

MNA/Reuters

Japanese voters could deal US a blow in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 17 Aug — Japan’s election next month could end up costing the United States another ally in Iraq, a symbolic blow to Washington even if Tokyo’s overall pro-US foreign policy doesn’t change, experts said on Tuesday.

Both Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s Liberal Democratic Party and the opposition Democratic Party support the decades-old US-Japan security alliance, and the 11 September vote is being fought largely over Koizumi’s financial reform agenda.

Koizumi has forged close ties with US President George W Bush, bucking opposition to provide logistical support for US forces in Afghanistan and to send 550 Japanese troops to Iraq in Tokyo’s first significant overseas deployment since 1945.

MNA/Reuters

Four US soldiers killed north of Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 18 Aug — Four US soldiers were killed on Thursday in a roadside bomb attack in the northern Iraqi city of Samarra, the US military said.

“Four Task Force Liberty Soldiers were killed by an improvised explosive device in Samarra at about 11:15 am (0715 GMT) on 18 Aug,” the military said in a statement.

The names of the soldiers are being withheld pending notification of next of kin, the statement added.

Samarra, some 110 km north of Baghdad, has long been a bastion of attack against US and Iraqi forces.

Over 1,850 US soldiers have been killed in Iraq since the US-led invasion in March 2003, according to media tally. — MNA/Xinhua

2 US troops killed, 2 wounded in blast in Afghanistan

KABUL, 18 Aug — Two US soldiers were killed and two wounded when an improvised explosive device struck their armoured vehicle as it travelled north of Kandahar, Afghanistan, on Thursday, the US-led coalition force said.

Their vehicle was part of a convoy operating in the area in support of the Tarin Kowt road construction project, a US effort to build a modern major highway and improve local infrastructure, the coalition said in a news release.

The two US soldiers wounded in the attack were evacuated to Kandahar airfield for treatment where they are both listed in stable condition, added the coalition.

“There is a tragic loss for us all,” said Brig Gen Jack Sterling, Combined Joint Task Force 76 deputy commanding general. “These terrorists are attacking the every forces working to improve Afghanistan.”

MNA/Xinhua

An Iraqi soldier secures the area following a car bombing at the Al-Nahda bus station which links the capital with the predominantly Shiite regions to the south of Baghdad on 17 August, 2005. — Internet

A Kashmiri rows a small boat on the waters of Dal Lake in Srinagar, on 17 August, 2005. — Internet
Int’l specialists suggest more testing on pig-borne epidemic samples

BEIJING, 17 Aug—International specialists have suggested further testing on samples of Streptococcus suis outbreak in southwest China’s Sichuan Province, according to Beijing-based office of World Health Organization.

A group of international specialists on Streptococcus suis, including WHO technical staff, held a teleconference on 9 August to discuss this outbreak.

“The specialists suggested that further testing on samples from the Sichuan outbreak might be helpful, as would comparisons between the strain associated with this outbreak and strains linked to other occurrences in the past in China and other countries,” said WHO’s report on Tuesday.

“Chinese authorities have indicated that they are keen for such studies to be conducted,” it said.

Though the Streptococcus suis genome has been sequenced, the specialists observed, the function of between 20 and 30 per cent of the genome is still unknown. The specialists were reassured by the lack of evidence to suggest person-to-person transmission in the outbreak, as well as the lack of cases among children.

They said person-to-person transmission was unlikely to occur unless there was very close contact with infected material such as blood (something that would almost only occur in hospital settings).

Regarding a possible national and international spread of the outbreak, the specialists concurred with the Chinese authorities that the movements of live pigs, and the trade of pig carcasses and meat within and from the outbreak area, had to be carefully regulated and monitored. China says it has put strict measures in place to ensure this.

To date, the Ministry of Health of China (MOH) has reported 215 cases of human disease associated with the outbreak. Of these human cases, 39 have been fatal. No new cases have been reported since 5 August. Chinese authorities add that based on their investigation so far there is no evidence of human-to-human transmission, and no healthcare workers tending to the patients have been infected.

Further study is still needed, however, to try to determine why this outbreak was so large and included so many fatalities, especially compared to previous outbreaks in recent years, according to the MOH.

The MOH has provided WHO with regular updates through the course of this outbreak. “WHO will continue to monitor the situation, and is pleased to offer the Ministry of Health of China its support,” said the report.

Malaysian firms deny of setting fires in Sumatra

KUALA LUMPUR, 17 Aug—Malaysian plantation firms operating in Indonesia say they had no role in starting forest fires that wafted a choking haze over peninsular Malaysia last week, a Malaysian minister said on Tuesday.

The fires, many deliberately lit on Indonesia’s island of Sumatra to clear land for agriculture, are once again testing ties between the two Southeast Asian neighbours after the smoke caused Malaysia’s worst pollution crisis in eight years.

Indonesia named eight Malaysian plantation companies on Monday that it wants to hold responsible for setting fires on Sumatra in a practice that is illegal, although slash-and-burn clearing is allowed.

Indonesia’s Ministry of Environment and Forestry on Monday named eight Malaysian plantation companies, including those of the two largest in Malaysia, with logging and agricultural operations on Sumatra.

The decision has been made under the policy of observing golden jubilee of the first ascent to the mountains above 8,000 metres, the release said.

According to the release, an expedition team consisting of several human members will be made to pay 10,000 US dollars, while the additional amount of royalty on the additional number of mountaineering team has been slashed to 50 per cent.

The government expects that the decision will play positive role in the promotion of mountain tourism in Nepal, the release added.

India(next only to US, in drug patent applications)

NEW DELHI, 17 Aug—India has received 1,312 applications for patent of pharmaceutical products, becoming only the second country after the US to get a large number of such requests.

The US, which topped the list of countries that received patent applications for pharma products, received 2,111 applications. Germany finished third with 1,090 applications.

For the fourth position, there was a relatively close contest between Britain and Switzerland, which received 573 and 538 applications respectively.

Japan secured the sixth place in the list with 434 applications. Sweden was seventh with 351, France eighth with 289, Denmark ninth with 261 while Belgium came tenth with 170 applications.

Indonesian youths attempt to knock each other down into the water during a pillow fight game at a city canal in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 17 August, 2005. — INTERNET

MALAYSIA

Nepali Govt cuts fee by 50% for mountaineering teams

KATHMANDU, 17 Aug—The Nepali Government has decided to provide a 50-per-cent concession in the royalty charged to the mountaineering teams seeking permission to climb Mt Mansalu and Mt Lhotse from March to June 2006, a Press release issued by the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation said on Tuesday.

The decision has been made under the policy of observing golden jubilee of the first ascent to the mountains above 8,000 metres, the release said.

According to the release, an expedition team consisting of seven human members will be made to pay 10,000 US dollars, while the additional amount of royalty on the additional number of mountaineering team has been slashed to 50 per cent.

The government expects that the decision will play positive role in the promotion of mountain tourism in Nepal, the release added.

An otter swims through a tube at a feeding box, made of transparent acrylic boards at Tokyo’s Ueno Zoo recently. — INTERNET

China to launch top environmental award

BEIJING, 17 Aug—China Environmental Protection Foundation (CEPF) will invest 3.5 million yuan ($432,098 US dollars) annually to reward those who make outstanding contributions to environmental protection, with the highest premium scoring 500,000 yuan.

“The decision has been made under the policy of observing golden jubilee of the first ascent to the mountains above 8,000 metres, the release said.

According to the release, an expedition team consisting of seven human members will be made to pay 10,000 US dollars, while the additional amount of royalty on the additional number of mountaineering team has been slashed to 50 per cent.

The government expects that the decision will play positive role in the promotion of mountain tourism in Nepal, the release added.

The golden jubilee year of first ascent to the two mountains is being observed this year in Nepal. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/PTI

Japanese youths attempt to knock each other into the water during a pillow fight game at a city canal in Jakarta, Indonesia on 17 August, 2005. — INTERNET

Indonesian youths attempt to knock each other down into the water during a pillow fight game at a city canal in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 17 August, 2005. — INTERNET

Malaysian firms deny of setting fires in Sumatra

KUALA LUMPUR, 17 Aug—Malaysian plantation firms operating in Indonesia say they had no role in starting forest fires that wafted a choking haze over peninsular Malaysia last week, a Malaysian minister said on Tuesday.

The fires, many deliberately lit on Indonesia’s island of Sumatra to clear land for agriculture, are once again testing ties between the two Southeast Asian neighbours after the smoke caused Malaysia’s worst pollution crisis in eight years.

Indonesia named eight Malaysian plantation companies on Monday that it wants to hold responsible for setting fires on Sumatra in a practice that is illegal, although slash-and-burn clearing is allowed.

Smoke from the fires blanketed the Malaysian capital for nearly a week, threatening public health, disrupting transport and shutting down schools, until rain and breezes scattered the smog last Friday, carrying it north. On Tuesday, Malaysia’s Commodities Minister Peter Chin said the heads of plantation companies accused of setting some of the fires had told him they were not involved.

“I confirmed with the CEOs involved. They categorically denied carrying out any burning operations,” Chin told Reuters. The Malaysian firms practiced zero-burning techniques, he added. “In any case, their estates are already matured, so why should they clear land for plantation by burning?”

The plantation firms plan to resolve the issue by talking to their Indonesian counterparts and the authorities, Chin added.

Malaysia, fearing a return of the haze if the fires are not quickly put out, has sent a team of 100 firemen to help douse off the flames. Australia plans to send a team of 12 bushfire experts.

Indonesian officials said the situation had improved. “The situation is getting better. Hotspots are reduced, I don’t know for sure how much,” said Chaerul Zainal, chief of the environment supervision agency in Riau, where the bulk of the fires are concentrated.

In 1997, haze from mainly Indonesian fires blotted out skies across Southeast Asia. The fires are a perennial irritant, with Indonesia urged to act more quickly and Malaysian firms accused in turn of being part of the problem.

Malaysia is the biggest producer of palm oil and, during drier weather at this time of year, plantation owners sometimes float bams on open burning to clear land to plant new trees. — MNA/Reuters
Agricultural and ...

(from page 16)

for systematic use of roads. Local authorities, departmental officials and those in charge of the zones are to provide necessary assistance through coordination for extension of businesses and betterment of roads. Measures are to be taken for export of goods if the special zone produces surplus of vegetables, meat and fish. All the vacant plots are to be put under 28 species of designated vegetables.

Afterwards, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and officials inspected Linn Akaar Farm where over 7200 broilers are bred, cultivation of over 12,000 rubber plants in the garden of the police force at Nyaungnhabin and cultivation of turmeric sin Zone-3.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe urged the officials to extend the farming and fulfilled the requirements. There are 5765 acres of crops in Yangon Division Agriculture and Livestock Breeding Special Zone. Moreover, over 1 million broilers and over 2 million layers are raised in the zone. Over 1 million fish ponds reaches 515 where over 1.3 million fish are bred. — MNA

Special envoy of UN Secretary-General calls on Foreign Minister

YANGON, 18 Aug — Mr Ali Alatas, special envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, called on Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win. — MNA

Mr Ali Alatas, special envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General, calls on Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win. — MNA

YANGON, 18 Aug — The period from 15 to 20 August 2005 was designated to carry out activities for School Health Week for 2005-06 academic year. During the week, five school health tasks are being carried out at basic education schools in the entire nation.

Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein arrived at Tamway BEHS No 1 where Deputy Ministers U Myo Nyunt and Brig-Gen Aung Myo Min, directors-general, the chairman of Myanmar Board of Examinations, officials of the Health Department and officials welcomed the minister.

First, the minister, the deputy ministers and guests enjoyed health education video, and viewed school health tasks and participation of students in cartoon and essay competitions to mark the School Health Week. The minister gave necessary instruction to students.

Next, they viewed round the school health exhibition.

At Yankin Education College Practising Middle School, the principal and students briefed the minister and party on matters related to five points of school health programme. The minister and party viewed round feeding refreshment to the students, participation of the students in the health quiz and cartoon contest and showing of health education video. — MNA

Pre-Civil Service, Basic Civil Service courses conclude

YANGON, 18 Aug — Pre-Civil Service Course No 19 and Basic Civil Service Course No 169 concluded at the Central Institute of Civil Service (Phau-ngyi) this morning, attended by Rector of the institute U Win Maung.

The rector awarded model prizes to Daw Khine Thandar Nyunt and U Htein Min of pre-civil service course and Daw Khin Htwe Yi and U Myo Min of basic civil service course. Afterwards, the rector made a concluding speech and presented the completion certificates to the trainees. — MNA

Education Minister inspects School Health Week activities

YANGON, 18 Aug — The period from 15 to 20 August 2005 was designated to carry out activities for School Health Week for 2005-06 academic year. During the week, five school health tasks are being carried out at basic education schools in the entire nation.

Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein arrived at Tamway BEHS No 1 where Deputy Ministers U Myo Nyunt and Brig-Gen Aung Myo Min, directors-general, the chairman of Myanmar Board of Examinations, officials of the Health Department and officials welcomed the minister.

First, the minister, the deputy ministers and guests enjoyed health education video, and viewed school health tasks and participation of students in cartoon and essay competitions to mark the School Health Week. The minister gave necessary instruction to students.

Next, they viewed round the school health exhibition.

At Yankin Education College Practising Middle School, the principal and students briefed the minister and party on matters related to five points of school health programme. The minister and party viewed round feeding refreshment to the students, participation of the students in the health quiz and cartoon contest and showing of health education video. — MNA

Bago Yoma greening tasks inspected

YANGON, 18 Aug — Director-General of the Forest Department under the Ministry of Forestry U Sein Win Hlaing together with General Manager of Timber Extraction U Aye Win met the staff of Myanmar Timber Enterprise (Timber Extraction) of Bago District and Toungoo District in Bago and Toungoo on 14 August.

The director-general gave instructions to the staff on timely completion of the tasks. On 15 and 16 August, the director-general inspected the research works of Bago Yoma greening tasks. Next, the director-general left necessary instructions. — MNA

BODY BUILDING & BEAUTY CONTEST OF UEY — The closing session of Body Building & Beauty Contest organized by Fine Arts Association of the University of East Yangon seen on 5-8-2005. Rector U Kyi Win, Pro-rector (Reind) Advisor U Kyi Win and Chairperson of FAA Prof Daw Khin Aye Nwe awarded the winners after the contest. — H
Performance of service personnel will be noble if they discharge duties with goodwill

Measures are to be taken for establishment of Data Centre and Public Access Centre in collaboration with private business organizations and departments for the development of Mandalay MICT Park and constant coordination with Yangon MICT Park.

Prime Minister General Soe Win meets board of directors of Mandalay MICTDC in Mandalay MICT Park.— MNA

(from page 16)
The Prime Minister and party helicoptered to Zawgyi (Myogyi) dam project site near Myogyi Village, Ywangan Township, Shan State via Mandalay Industrial Zone. They were welcomed by Chairman of Shan State PDC Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint and officials.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister U Ohn Myint briefed them on arrangements for implementation of Zawgyi dam project for water supply of Meiktila Plain, preliminary engineering works and preparatory tasks being carried out for construction of Kengkham dam project with the aid. Lt-Gen Ye Myint raised the queries on project tasks for greening Meiktila Plain and Deputy Minister U Ohn Myint and Deputy Director-General of Irrigation Department U Khin Zaw reported on the greening tasks.

Next, the Prime Minister heard reports on construction of Zawgyi (Myogyi) dam, and gave instructions to officials to get down to the business of construction in the upcoming open season. Arrangements are being made for supply of water from Zawgyi dam built on Zawgyi River in Yaksawk Township and water from the watershed area between Zawgyi Dam and Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam to farmlands and Meiktila Plain.

Zawgyi (Myogyi) dam will be 2,650 feet in length and 282 feet in height. It is an earth embankment. It will store 480,580 acre feet of water. It can also generate electricity. Kengkham Dam project will be implemented on Nan-et Creek in Yaksawk Township with a view to supplying water to Zawgyi Dam for contribution much to greening Meiktila Plain.

The Prime Minister and party flew to inspect irrigation facilities constructed and under construction between Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam Project site and Meiktila. On arrival at Meiktila Station in the afternoon, they were welcomed by Brig-Gen Khin Maung Tin, senior military officers and officials. They proceeded to Meiktila Institute of Economics. Rector U Than Swe reported on subjects prescribed, strength of students and faculty members, and buildings constructed and under construction; and Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein and Deputy Minister for Science and Technology U Kyaw Soe, on academic matters and construction tasks.

The Prime Minister gave instructions on the construction tasks and inspected the convocation hall, e-Education learning centre, e-Education resource centre, computer training centre, language lab, lecture halls, and progress of construction of hostels for female faculty members.

Next, the Prime Minister attended the meeting held at Kandaw Mingalar Hall in Meiktila to seek ways for greening Meiktila Plain and irrigation of farmland.

Also present were departmental officials, local authorities, and members of the agricultural coordination committee. Commander Maj-Gen Khin Zaw reported on phased implementation of the project; Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation U Ohn Myint, on irrigation of more than 539,000 acres of farmland in Mandalay Division in 2005-2006, arrangements for supply of water to over 555,000 acres in 2006-2007, measures taken to meet the target of cultivation of crops including over 800,000 acres of monsoon paddy and 200,000 acres of summer paddy, and all-round efforts for water supply including Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam and Kengkham Dam projects for greening Meiktila Plain, and coordination with Yangon MICT Park and constant coordination with Yangon MICT Park.

The Prime Minister said that during the inspection tour, he attended to needs for regional greening, irrigation of farmland, and supply of safe potable water in Magway and Sagaing divisions. Prior to the tour, he inspected Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam Project (See page 9.)

Prime Minister General Soe Win inspects lecture halls of Meiktila Institute of Economics.— MNA
Carry out tasks with sense of duty under the leadership of the State for regional and national development

and other projects for greening of Meiktila Plain.

The Water Resources Utilization Department and the Irrigation Department are implementing the projects effectively to meet the target, while other relevant ministers and local people are taking part in the project.

In that regard, serious attention needs to be paid to ensuring success in water supply as the arid zone greening tasks and water supply directly benefit the people.

The performance here by air yesterday morning.

Central Executive Committee Members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Col Zaw Min, Brig-Gen Thein Aung and Maj-Gen Aung Min, who accompanied the Prime Minister, met with secretaries, executives and members of USDAs of Meiktila District and townships at the office of Meiktila District USDA on 16 August evening. Similarly, Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo inspected Meiktila People’s Hospital.

Arrangements are being made for water supply to Meiktila Plain with the use of water from Zawgyi Dam built on Zawgyi River in Yaksawk Township, Shan State (South), and Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam being built.

Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam will be 2650 feet in length and 282 feet in height. It is of an earth embankment. It will hold 480,580 acre feet. It can also generate electricity.

Meiktila Institute of Economics. — MNA

Central Executive Committee Member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Col Zaw Min meeting with USDA members at Meiktila District USDA Office. — MNA

Prime Minister General Soe Win delivers a speech at the meeting on greening of Meiktila Plain and irrigation. — MNA

Meiktila Institute of Economics. — MNA

Central Executive Committee Members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Col Zaw Min meeting with USDA members at Meiktila District USDA Office. — MNA

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Meiktila Institute of Economics. — MNA
USDA Secretariat Member Information
Minister tours Yinmabin, Pale and Salingyi

YANGON, 18 Aug — USDA Secretariat Member Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan made a field trip to Yinmabin, Pale and Salingyi townships, Sagaing Division, from 13 to 17 August.

On 13 August, the Secretariat Member met with local authorities, and social organization members, totalling 870 of villages at Pepinzu Village BEMS in Yinmabin Township.

After giving instructions on regional development, the Secretariat Member accepted 4,308 USDA membership applications from the village organizer.

Next, he presented soap, kitchen items, blankets, textbooks and exercise books, various books for self-reliant libraries and donations of Myanmar Red Cross Society to Minkangyi Village. Officials of Yinmabin Township IPRD, Monywa District and Yinmabin Township USAs, Yinmabin Township Peace and Development Council and Seinlan Thitpin Library of Yinmabin Township donated various kinds of books to representatives of respective villages.

Afterwards, the minister and party attended the ceremony to open the Yanggyyihib Library of Pepinzu Village.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretariat Member Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan said that he arrived there to know correct conditions of rural areas and provide necessary assistance to villages in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe.

The Government is giving priority to improvement of the education sector for development of human resources development. As today is education age, efforts are being made for turning out educated persons. At the same time, parents are responsible for giving encouragement to their children to pursue education. Only when technologies improve, will the country achieve development. Regional development reflects improvement of the State. At present, the Government is carrying out rural development tasks in over 60,000 villages of the whole nation.

During 10-year period, the Tatmadaw Government has built 176 dams for agricultural purposes. Likewise, the Government provided facilities in the education sector and the construction sector.

The Government is undertaking nation-building tasks overcoming various hindrances of internal and external destructive elements. Nowadays, colonialists are applying new enslavement method to control the subject nations through their lackeys. All are to be aware of their new enslavement plot. And, the people are to harmoniously take part in realizing the seven-point Road Map and setting up the democratic nation.

On 15 August evening, the Secretariat Member enjoyed skill demonstration of Pale BEHS Band and presented K 100,000 to it.

At Bo Tha Kyi Hall at Pale BEHS, he met with departmental personnel and members of social organizations of Monywa District and Pale Township. In his address, he said that as the Government is performing development tasks with momentum, In- departmental officials and staff are to discharge their duties with goodwill. Strength of the Government, that of local authorities and departments and that of local people are essential in building a new modern and developed nation. All are to collaborate in supplying power to rural areas through bio-gas and windmills. He urged the local people to cooperate with the Government for technological development.

Next, the minister presented K 3 million for new building of Pale BEHS, K 500,000 for Pale Township USDA. K 300,000 for Yinmabin Township USDA and K 100,000 for construction of a new building at Ingon BEPS in Yinmabin Township to officials. — MNA
Chinese family planning officials join in fight against AIDS

ZHENGZHOU, 18 Aug — Over 140 family planning officials from seven provinces in China attended a two-day training seminar here, learning how to combine their population work experience with the fight against HIV/AIDS.

At the 15-16 August Initiative and Training Workshop for Population and Family Planning Sectors in Global Fund HIV/AIDS Programme Areas, family planning officials from 58 counties or districts received training on China’s HIV/AIDS situation, prevention and control measures, condom use programmes, and how to conduct support and provide people living with HIV/AIDS. Officials and medical experts from the National Population and Family Planning Commission (NPFFC), Global Fund HIV/AIDS China programme office, World Health Organization and Chinese Central for Disease Prevention and Control shared their knowledge on a range of issues at the workshop.

China’s population and family planning department has a nationwide network, including the grass-roots level, which helps it outreach others in carrying out educational programmes on HIV/AIDS, HIV monitoring, consulting and offering assistance to the HIV-infected, and treatment and expert one of the trainers said.

He said the participation of population and family planning committees is beneficial to helping the general public to protect themselves and care about the HIV-infected by knowing more about the disease.

“I used to think AIDS was not our domain, but the training has changed my mind. I think we should fight against it and moreover, take the initiative,” said Yang Fujian from the Hubei provincial population and family planning commission in central China.

“The biggest change is that the two-day training has made it come to understand that the HIV-infected not only need material support, but more humanitarian care and understanding from the public.”

These officials each received a questionnaire to evaluate their understanding about HIV/AIDS transmission channels, prevention measures, the right attitude toward the HIV-infected and how they think they should do in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

In central Henan Province, family planning officials have launched a campaign designed to help people with HIV/AIDS, including holding training programmes on AIDS prevention among village and town levels, providing financial assistance to disadvantaged HIV-infected groups such as poor mothers, orphans and pregnant women. — MNA/Xinhua

ADB funds to develop remote areas in Fiji Islands

MANILA, 18 Aug — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is preparing a project to help develop rural and outer islands in the Fiji Islands, through a technical assistance (TA) grant approved for 700,000 US dollars, according to ADB news release on Tuesday.

The total cost of the TA is estimated at 994,000 US dollars, toward which 294,000 US dollars equivalent.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Sugar, and Land Resettlement of Fiji Island is the executing agency for the TA, which is due for completion in November 2005.

The planned project will help improve income-earning opportunities and reduce economic disparities in the poor rural and outer islands of the Fiji Islands.

“These remote areas have tremendous potential for tourism, marine, and agriculture development,” says Philip Erquiaga, Director General of ADB Pacific Department.

The TA will identify potential income-generating opportunities and priority investment areas for infrastructure development, and the potential for private-sector collaboration with island communities to develop locally available resources.

It will also evaluate policy and institutional constraints affecting the development of outer islands, the ADB official said. The Fiji Islands’ 320 islands are scattered across 150,000 square kilometres in the South Pacific Ocean.

About 75 per cent of the population of 825,000 lives on the two main islands, with the rest residing in about 100 small scattered outer islands.

— MNA/Xinhua

New Iran atomic negotiator backs talks to solve row

TEHERAN, 18 Aug — Iran’s new chief nuclear negotiator has given his backing to talks to resolve its atomic standoff with the West, while insisting that Teheran will not give up its plans to develop a full nuclear fuel cycle.

“Irancell deems it a principle to continue talks and it accepts negotiation as the right manner,” Ali Larjani, installed as secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council on Monday, told the Shargh daily in an interview published on Tuesday.

European diplomats have expressed concern that Larjani, a conservative close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, will adopt a tougher line on the nuclear issue than his predecessor Hassan Rohani.

Larjani takes over the nuclear portfolio with Iran in the international spotlight after removing UN seals at a nuclear facility and resuming uranium conversion — a process which yields material that can be used to make atomic bombs.

Iran, which says its nuclear programme will only be used to generate electricity, rejected a resolution adopted by the UN atomic watchdog last week calling on it to halt all nuclear fuel work.

But Larjani said a solution to the dispute could be found.

“We can reach a conclusion with a win-win situation defined for both sides... We should try to solve the problem in a friendly way and our objective is still preserving the fuel cycle,” he said.

Iran angered the European Union and the United States by resuming uranium conversion at the Isfahan plant on 8 August after rejecting an EU offer of political and economic incentives in return for giving up its nuclear programme.

Iranian officials have said they will never suspend work at the plant again and Teheran now wants to discuss resuming the most sensitive part of the nuclear fuel cycle — uranium enrichment — at its facility in Natanz.

“Natanz is a part of our fuel cycle and we insist on it. However, it should pass the channel of negotiations,” Larjani said. — MNA/Reuters

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

The second best time is now.
Boat with 100 migrants intercepted off Spain

MAKASAR, 17 Aug—Two African migrants died after two months at sea trying to reach Spain on a fishing boat crammed with about 100 people. Local officials said on Tuesday after intercepting the vessel.

"Thirty passengers were in a serious condition," a spokesman for the Tenerife regional government said. Authorities were guiding the boat to land, where a medical team was waiting to treat them.

"It is being tugged, but very slowly because the boat is in a bad state and there are poor sea conditions with strong waves," Rosa Lopez, a spokeswoman for the emergency services, told RNE national radio.

Another boat with about 37 immigrants on board was around 120 miles off the coast of the Canary Islands and was making its way towards land, local officials said.

"We could not say where the immigrants were from," Lopez said. —MNA/Reuters

Philippines cuts tariff on oil products

MANILA, 17 Aug—Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has reduced the tariff on imported oil products and is planning to abolish excise taxes on them to mitigate the impact of rising oil prices, officials said Tuesday.

The tariff rate on imported oil was reduced to 3 per cent. In particular, President Arroyo ordered to cut down the tax on bio-ethanol fuel as an alternative to the high-cost crude, local reports said.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Press Secretary Anne Marie Bynae announced that the excise taxes would be eliminated, according to the new executive order issued by Arroyo.

Excise taxes on diesel, kerosene and bunker fuel oil would also be reduced pending the Supreme Court’s action on the Expanded Value Added Tax Law, the order said. —MNA/Xinhua

Regional workshop on climate scenario begins in Nepal

KATHMANDU, 17 Aug—A five-day-long regional workshop on "Climate Scenarios for South Asia" kicked off here on Tuesday.

"The changing global climate has affected Nepal," said Harish Chandra Amaty, secretary at the Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology, at the inaugural session of the workshop.

"The ever-increasing fossil fuel consumption is the major reason for the erratic climatic pattern," Khan noted, adding, "The workshop is also an assessment of corresponding likely impact of changing global scenario, Khan noted."
**Scientists find key for forecasting solar storms**

**Los Angeles, 17 Aug**—A new study revealing previously unknown aspects to solar eruptions may lead to better understanding of solar storms and more reliable forecasts for space weather, scientists reported on Tuesday.

Solar flares are important because radiation from particles in the sun's outer atmosphere may have hazardous effects on unprotected astronauts, military communications, and satellites, said Karel Schrijver of the Lockheed Martin Advanced Technology Centre, lead author of a paper published in the Astrophysical Journal.

While researchers have learned much about the Sun's temperature in recent years, relying on new data from satellites that keep a constant eye on the sun's atmosphere, many mysteries remain and forecasts are not as reliable as weather predictions were in the 1950s, experts said.

But the new study has made big strides in learning how to forecast “all clear” periods, when severe space weather is unlikely, said Schrijver.

Solar flares are violent explosions in the atmosphere of the sun caused by the sudden release of magnetic energy. Like a rubber band twisted too tightly, stressed magnetic fields in the sun’s atmosphere can suddenly snap to a new shape. They can release as much energy as one 10-billion-megaton nuclear bomb.

Probe into the causes of the largest solar flares came in two steps, the researchers said:

1. First, we discovered characteristic patterns of magnetic field evolution associated with strong electrical currents in the sun’s atmosphere that could be used to forecast “all clear” periods.
2. Then, we discovered the regions most likely to have magnetic fields that would be clear of alignment with the existing field.

This emerging field from the solar interior appears to reduce even more current as it interacts with the existing field.

**US media outlets report computer outages**

**Seattle, 17 Aug**—An unidentified software virus was being blamed for computer system outages on Tuesday at ABC News, CNN and The New York Times, as computer security companies tried to pin down the cause of the disruption.

CNN, breaking into regular programming, reported on air that personal computers running Microsoft Corp.'s Windows 2000 operating system at the Cable News Network were affected by a worm that caused them to restart repeatedly.

Over the last week, Microsoft and security companies warned of a new worm, called "Zotob," that could allow an attacker to access PCs by exploiting a recently discovered flaw in Windows 2000.

But security software company McAfee Inc. and Microsoft said that they did not see any heightened activity from Zotob or any indication that the worm caused outages at US media outlets on Tuesday.

"The New York Times" said it had faced internal systems computer outages earlier in the day.

"We don't have a lot of details," said Catherine Mathis, spokeswoman for the New York Times Co. "It was earlier today. We're fully operational and we don't expect (the outage) to affect the production of the paper."

Officials at ABC News said they reported system outages for "We haven't seen any huge uptick or impact today," said a spokesman with Microsoft's support unit. "A fairly small number of customers are being impacted."

McAfee, the world's second largest software maker, said that it is investigating whether there was a new worm or virus circulating on the Internet.

**Mysterious reptile eludes capture in LA park**

**Los Angeles, 17 Aug**—A mysterious, alligator-like creature that surfaced in a Los Angeles suburb has eluded capture for nearly a week, shrewdly passing up raw chicken bait and dodging reptile wranglers in pontoon boats.

The five-foot-long (1.5-metre) reptile was first spotted last Wednesday swimming in a lake at an urban park in the gritty Los Angeles suburb of Harbour City.

Park officials concluded that it was probably a Caiman, a relative of the alligator indigenous to South America, and speculate that it may have been an exotic pet that was abandoned when it grew too large.

As word of the odd sighting spread, hundreds of spectators have turned up to watch crews of police, firefighters, park rangers, state fish and wildlife workers and even local herpetologists comb the 53-acre (21-hectare) lake in pontoon boats, carrying nets and dangling raw chicken over the side.

Park officials are planning to take the reptile to the LA zoo when they capture it but all efforts so far to nab the creature have failed, despite claims by a local fisherman that he briefly ensnared it in a net by using flour tortillas as bait.

"They're very fast, you can't believe how fast these animals are," Jarron Lucas of the Southwestem Herpetology Society told local KABC-7TV.

**Water-borne diseases claim 247 lives in Maharashtra State**

**New Delhi, 17 Aug**—With 14 more deaths in India's financial hub Mumbai, the death toll due to water-borne diseases, including leptospirosis, rose to 142 in the state on Tuesday, while the Maharashtra State reported a total of 247 deaths so far, the Press Trust of India reported from Mumbai.

"The number of serious cases was going down and there is a marked decrease in cases reported and admissions to hospitals in the city and surrounding areas, hospital sources told PTI on Tuesday."

**New aerospace technologies go on display at Moscow Air Show**

**Moscow, 17 Aug**—Russia put its latest aerospace technologies on display on Tuesday as the Moscow International Air Show opened to offer visitors a close look at state-of-the-art aircraft and space technologies on display on Tuesday as the Moscow International Air Show opened to offer visitors a close look at state-of-the-art aircraft and space technologies on display on Tuesday as the Moscow International Air Show opened.
Beckham, Owen say no excuses for England's defeat

COPENHAGEN, 18 Aug — Captain David Beckham and striker Michael Owen said there were no excuses for England's 4-1 friendly rout by Denmark on Wednesday.

With two World Cup qualifiers scheduled next month, England's defence was ripped apart by a Danish side who scored three goals in the space of seven minutes. "I don't know what went wrong," Beckham told reporters.

"There are no excuses... We should still be winning these games. The only positive thing we can take out of the game is that it was a friendly." As for the manner of the defeat, he said: "It's always a slight embarrassment when a team scores three quick goals against you in front of five or six thousand fans that have travelled all the way from England to watch the team play.

"We've just got that right and perform in the games that matter." England are two points behind Group Six leaders Poland with a game in hand, before playing Wales and Northern Ireland away in September and Austria and the Poles at home in October. "We have a lot of work to do before four tough games coming up," Beckham said. "Confidence-wise we just have to forget about this game."

Owen, who started the second half in place of Jermaine Defoe up front, was on the same wavelength as his Real Madrid club team mate. "It was a disappointing night and there's not really any excuses," Owen said. "It's the start of the season, everyone's fit and there are no injuries. "Everybody knows that we are a better team than that," Owen added.

"Thank God it wasn't a qualifying game."

Japan edge out Iran 2-1 to qualify in top spot

YOKOHAMA (Japan), 18 Aug — Japan overcame Iran 2-1 at home on Wednesday to finish top of their World Cup qualifying group, although both teams had already secured their places at next year's finals.

Japan had beaten Japan 2-1 in Teheran in March but both sides were below full-strength for their final Group B match. Japan finished with 15 points from six matches, two ahead of Iran. Bahrain were already assured of a playoff spot before their game at home to North Korea later on Tuesday.

Iran coach Branko Ivankovic insisted he was not concerned over the result and was magnanimous in defeat. "I think you saw both teams prove they are the best teams in Asia," said the Croatian. "I was happy with the way we came back in the second half. We showed a lot of character."

Vicente leads Spain to 2-0 victory over Uruguay

GOION (Spain), 18 Aug — Spain midfielder Vicente led his side to an encouraging 2-0 victory over Uruguay in a friendly international on Wednesday. The Valencia player gave a fine, two-wing performance on the left wing, creating Spain's opener in the 25th minute after a late run into the area and extending his side's lead from the penalty spot before halftime.

For Spain the victory will provide them with a boost ahead of next month's potentially decisive World Cup qualifier against Switzerland and the tournament leader's qualification campaign in the group stage.

"We've had earthquakes, typhoons and political arguments along the way but we've come through," said Vicente. Zico told the crowd of 66,000 at an emotional post-match ceremony.

"This team has the self-belief and the mental strength to overcome those sorts of obstacles. We still need to improve but finishing top will give us a lift before the World Cup."

Midfielder Akira Kaji struck from close range in the 28th minute and striker Massashi Oguro was credited with Japan's second 20 minutes into the second half in sweltering Yokohama.

Iran's talisman Ali Daie pulled one back from the penalty spot moments later to mark his 105th goal in 141 internationals. The 36-year-old also hit the post with a fierce drive just before halftime.

Vicente celebrates comeback with classy 3-0 win

MONTPELLIER (France), 18 Aug — Zinedine Zidane marked his international comeback with a goal in France's 3-0 win over Ivory Coast in a friendly on Wednesday.

The Real Madrid playmaker, returning to the France team with contentious defender Lilian Thuram and Chelsea midfielder Claude Makelele, treated the fans to some tricks but failed to make a real impact until his goal shortly after the hour.

After and before, defender William Gallas and striker Thierry Henry celebrated their 28th birth-
days with goals, scoring in the 28th and 67th minutes respectively.

Zidane received a deafening welcome from the crowd at Montpellier's Mosson stadium, with both France and Ivory Coast fans chanting his name, 11 years to the day after he won his first cap in a 2-2 draw with the Czech Republic in Bordeaux.

"Zizou, France say thank you," read a banner. "Zizou, show us the way to the World Cup," said another.

France were hoping for a good warm-up before resuming their World Cup qualifying campaign in two weeks. They are fourth in European Group Four, behind leaders Ireland, Switzerland and Israel.

But the Ivory Coast 'Elephants' made the better start with RC Lens forward Aruna Dindane wreaking havoc in the French defence.

France had two clear chances early in the game but Henry and midfielder Florent Malouda, who replaced the injured Patrick Vieira in the starting line-up, shot wide.

Ivory Coast almost went ahead in the 20th minute but keeper Gregory Coupet parried a powerful Didier Drogba volley from just outside the box.

In the 22nd minute, Thuram, who became France's second most capped player with his 104th appearance overlooking former captain Didier Deschamps, limped off.

"It looks like a thigh injury," said France coach Raymond Domenech.

Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei rushes to the net during the second round match against Martin Lewis at the IBF World Badminton Championships in Anaheim, California, on 17 August, 2005. Lee won 15-1, 15-4.

Japan's midfielder Mituo Ogawara (L) and striker Masashi Oguro (R) fight for the ball with Iran's Mohammad Nosrati during the second half of the second round qualifying final match of the FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 Asian Group B at Yokohama International Stadium, south of Tokyo, on 17 August, 2005. Japan defeated Iran 2-1 to place first in the group. Iran finished at second. The both of the countries have already qualified for the World Cup 2006 finals. —INTERNET

Striker Kanoute signs four-year deal for Sevilla

MADRID, 18 Aug — Sevilla have signed Mali striker Frederic Kanoute on a four-year contract from Tottenham Hotspur for a fee of 6.5 million euros (eight million US dollars), the Primera Liga club said on Wednesday.

Spurs said on their website the 27-year-old had agreed personal terms with Sevilla and would sign for the Spanish club subject to a successful medical.

Sevilla said they would present the player to the media at their Sanchez Pizjuan stadium at 0800 GMT on Thursday. Kanoute, who joined Spurs in August 2003 from West Ham United, will compete with Argentine striker Javier Saviola and Brazilian forward Luis Fabiano for a place in the Sevilla attack.

The three players will attempt to fill the gap left by leading striker Julio Baptista, who signed for Real Madrid last month for a fee of up to 24.5 million euros.

Sevilla, who finished sixth last season to earn themselves a place in the UEFA Cup for the second year in succession, said Kanoute was signed at the request of the club's technical staff and new coach Juande Ramos. The lanky striker began his career at Olympique Lyon and went on to become an Under-21 international for France, although he later changed his allegiance to Mali for whom he played at the 2004 African Nations Cup. —MNA/Reuters

Japan's midfielder Mituo Ogawara (L) and striker Masashi Oguro (R) fight for the ball with Iran's Mohammad Nosrati during the second half of the second round qualifying final match of the FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 Asian Group B at Yokohama International Stadium, south of Tokyo, on 17 August, 2005. Japan defeated Iran 2-1 to place first in the group. Iran finished at second. The both of the countries have already qualified for the World Cup 2006 finals. —INTERNET

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Sevilla said they would present the player to the media at their Sanchez Pizjuan stadium at 0800 GMT on Thursday. Kanoute, who joined Spurs in August 2003 from West Ham United, will compete with Argentine striker Javier Saviola and Brazilian forward Luis Fabiano for a place in the Sevilla attack.

The three players will attempt to fill the gap left by leading striker Julio Baptista, who signed for Real Madrid last month for a fee of up to 24.5 million euros.

Sevilla, who finished sixth last season to earn themselves a place in the UEFA Cup for the second year in succession, said Kanoute was signed at the request of the club's technical staff and new coach Juande Ramos. The lanky striker began his career at Olympique Lyon and went on to become an Under-21 international for France, although he later changed his allegiance to Mali for whom he played at the 2004 African Nations Cup. —MNA/Reuters

Japan's midfielder Mituo Ogawara (L) and striker Masashi Oguro (R) fight for the ball with Iran's Mohammad Nosrati during the second half of the second round qualifying final match of the FIFA World Cup Germany 2006 Asian Group B at Yokohama International Stadium, south of Tokyo, on 17 August, 2005. Japan defeated Iran 2-1 to place first in the group. Iran finished at second. The both of the countries have already qualified for the World Cup 2006 finals. —INTERNET
Series of bomb blasts in Bangladesh kill one, injure 115

DHAKA, 18 Aug — At least one person was killed and 115 others were injured Wednesday in a series of almost simultaneous bomb blasts in 58 out of 64 districts in Bangladesh, including many places in the capital Dhaka, local television reported. A private television channel NTV in its bulletin at 2 pm local time (0800 GMT) said 350 bombs of time devices were detonated almost simultaneously. Many unexploded bombs were recovered by security forces.

So far no group has claimed responsibility for the bombing attacks across the country, but another private television channel ATN Bangla showed a leaflet found with an arrested man of an Islamic group.

MNA/Xinhua/Reuters

WEATHER

Thursday, 18 August, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Magway Division, rain has been isolated in Kayah State and lower Sagaing Division, scattered in upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Yangon Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavyfall in Rakhine State. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Gwa (4.88) inches, Hpa-an (2.16) inches, Tharawady (2.05) inches and Bhamo (1.97) inches.

Maximum temperature on 17-8-2005 was 85°F. Minimum temperature on 18-8-2005 was 69°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 18-8-2005 was 92%. Total sunshine hours on 17-8-2005 was 1.1 hours approx. Rainfalls on 18-8-2005 were 0.32 inch at Mingaladon, 1.10 inch at Kabau-Aye, 1.22 inches at central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were 65.63 inches at Mingaladon, 67.32 inches at Kabau-Aye and 69.49 inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kabau-Aye) was 12 mph from Southwest at (12:35) hours MST 17-8-2005.

Bay inference: Monsoon is strong in the Andaman Sea, South Bay and moderate elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 19-8-2005: Rain will be isolated in Kayah State, lower Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, scattered in upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Mon State and Taninthayi Division. Degree of certainty is 80%.

State of the sea: Temporal squalls with rough seas are likely in Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed may reach (35) to (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 19-8-2005: Some rain. Degree of certainty is 80%. Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 19-8-2005: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is 60%.

Earthquake report

(Issued at 02:00 hrs MST on 18.8.2005)

An earthquake of slight intensity (4.6) Richter Scale with its epicenter outside of Myanmar about (296) miles Northeast of Kaba-Aye seisological observatory was recorded at (01) hr (09) min (10) sec MST on 18th August 2005.

CASH DONATION: An official of the Hninzigon Home for the Aged accepts the cash donated by Daw Pann Yin (a) Takako Suzuki, and U Pan Hlu-Daw Aye Aye Myint. The donation amounted to K 150,000 will be spent on an elevator at the Home for the Aged—n
Teachers, especially the products of the University for Development of National Races, are required to lend themselves to regional and national development endeavours, including development plans for rural and border areas, together with local people and social organizations.

Afterwards, the Prime Minister and party viewed computer hardware and software, company office rooms which are conducting courses and disseminating techniques, training halls, use of sophisticated accessories and Cyber Square Internet Cafe.

After that the Prime Minister signed in the visitors’ book.

Next, the Prime Minister and party proceeded to the construction project of Myitnge bridge situated on No 6 Yangon-Mandalay Highway between Singaing and Amarapura being implemented by Public Works.

At the briefing hall, Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein and the engineer in charge briefed them on progress in building of Myitnge bridge.

After giving instructions to officials concerned, the Prime Minister and party inspected construction tasks of the bridge.

Construction of Myitnge bridge with six lanes is cent per cent complete and it will be opened soon. (See page 7)

Prime Minister General Soe Win inspects progress of Zawgyi (Myogyi) Dam Project near Myogyi Village in Ywangan Township. — MNA

Agricultural and livestock breeding tasks inspected

YANGON, 18 Aug — Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe inspected Yangon Division Vegetables Cultivation and Livestock Breeding Special Zone near Nyaunghnapin Village in Hmaubgy Township this afternoon.

The commander inspected the breeding of over 11,000 layers, over 100 turkeys and over 2,000 pheasants, and vegetable patches in No 2 livestock breeding farm, and provided assistance for extension of agricultural and livestock breeding tasks inspected the farming.

At No 2 Zone of Yangon Division Vegetables Cultivation and Livestock Breeding Special Zone, the commander heard reports by officials on agricultural and livestock tasks, reconstruction of roads, and assistance rendered for smoothness of the tasks.

Chairman of the Supervisory Committee for the Special Zone Commissioner of Yangon Division General Administration Department U Hla Soe gave an account of progress in repairing roads and agricultural and livestock breeding tasks in the zone; Director of Division Irrigation Department U Kyaw Thein, on work for proper drainage; officials, on sufficient supply of electricity, upgrading of communication system, and measures being taken for enforcing regulations in the zone; and national entrepreneurs, on requirements for extension of the tasks.

The commander gave instructions on repairing roads linking one zone and another, and supervision (See page 7)

Myanmar to meet Malaysia in final

YANGON, 18 Aug — The ASEAN U-20 Youth Championship continued at Palenbang of Indonesia, at 7 pm local time yesterday.

At the second semifinal match, Malaysia beat Laos 2-1 and cruised into the final.

Myanmar selected youth team will play against Malaysian youth team at Palenbang of Indonesia at 7.15 pm local time on 19 August.