Growing rubber can contribute to combating poppy cultivation, development of border areas and national races, growth of the State economy.

NAY PYI TAW, 29 April — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing and departmental officials, arrived at Myanma Shwephyu Rubber Farm in Monglan Village-tract of Kengtung Township on 27 April.

Farm owner Daw Aye Aye Win reported on the plan to extend 600 acres of rubber plantation, extraction of rubber latex, and collection of 200,000 rubber saplings.

Lt-Gen Kyaw Win said that cultivation of rubber can create jobs for the locals. The increased individual income reflects economic development of the region and uplift of living standard of the local people. Growing rubber as poppy-substitute crop can contribute to combating poppy cultivation and development of border areas and national races as well as growth of the State economy. Furthermore, cultivation of rubber will be able to conserve greening Shan plateau and climatic condition.

He instructed officials to distribute quality rubber saplings to local growers.

A total of 87,000 rubber saplings were grown at 320 acres of Myanma Shwephyu Rubber Farm in 1997. At present, latex is being extracted from 75 acres of the farm.

In the evening, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and party paid homage to Khemarattha Standing Buddha Statue in Kengtung. At Thittabin Hill, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win heard reports on conservation of Thittabin Hill presented by the commander. Lt-Gen Kyaw Win instructed officials to build a tower for enjoying scenic beauty of Kengtung to be able to attract tourists. — MNA

Exhibition to mark Fifth Myanmar ICT Week-2006 opened

YANGON, 29 April — Under the supervision of the e-National Task Force of the Union of Myanmar, the exhibition to mark the Fifth Myanmar ICT Week-2006 was opened at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road this morning.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of e-National Task Force Minister for Communications, Posts and Telecommunications Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Vice-Chairman of e-National Task Force Member of Civil Service Selection and Training Board U Aung Myint, members of Board of Directors of Myanmar Infotech, officials of Myanmar Computer Federation and Myanmar Computer Scientists Association, Myanmar Computer Industry Association, Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association, IT technicians and officials of IT companies.

First, Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence and Minister of Defence and Minister Brig-Gen Thein Zaw formally opened the exhibition. Next, Lt-Gen Myint Swe and party viewed the booths to mark the Fifth Myanmar ICT Week-2006 at the exhibition. All together the 79 companies are putting on display with 150 booths at the exhibition and anyone may visit there. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Fruits of development in border areas

Myanmar is home to various national races who have been living in the Union in unity and amity. Hence, with a view to serving the interests of the entire national people, the government is making all-out efforts to bring about equitable development the length and breadth of the nation.

In particular, priority is being given to improvement of socio-economic life of local people in border areas that lagged behind in development in successive eras. As a result, progress has been made in all spheres.

The government had spent over K 81,000 million on development of border areas and national races, resulting in the emergence of a string of development infrastructures in those regions. To bring about better transport in border areas, roads and bridges are being constructed. Now, over 3,000 miles of earth road, nearly 2,000 miles of gravel road and 355 miles of tarred road have emerged along with 51 above 100 feet long bridges, 725 under 100 feet long bridges and 26 suspension bridges.

In the education sector of border areas, there emerged 1,034 schools in which over 100,000 students are pursuing education. In the health sector of border areas, there are altogether 79 hospitals, 105 dispensaries, 58 rural health care centres and 140 health care branches that are now taking health care of local people.

Meanwhile, leaders of national races and local people are making relentless efforts under the leadership of the government for regional development. With rapid development in transport, economic, education, health and social sectors, modern towns and cities have emerged in border areas coupled with a series of agricultural and livestock breeding works.

Development of border areas can be attributed to prevalence of peace in the region. Therefore, the national brethren are to constantly maintain and safeguard the already-restored peace.

All in all, it is incumbent upon the entire national people to make concerted efforts for regional development while maintaining and safeguarding peace and stability of the State.

Tax-free markets inspected

YANGON, 27 April — Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence inspected tax-free markets here this morning. Together with Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Hla Htay Win, Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and senior military officers, Lt-Gen Myint Swe went to the tax-free markets in Sangyoung, Dagon, Tamway, Yankin and Mayangon Townships and inspected the sales at the markets where the officials concerned conducted them around.

Left instructions there and attended to the needs. At the markets packed with dealers, the shops are selling fresh meat, eggs and vegetables as well as household goods to the people at reasonable prices. Plans are being implemented to open more tax-free markets in Hlinethaya, Shwepyitha, Dagon Myothit (South) and Dagon Myothit (North) townships. — MNA

USDA Secretary-General meets Shan State (East) USDA members

YANGON, 28 April — USDA Secretary-General U Htay Oo and CEC Member U Thein Nyunt met with state/division/township USDA members at Kengtung Township USDA Office in Shan State (East) on 24 April and it was attended by the secretary of Shan State (East) USDA, executives and townelders.

After hearing reports of state/division/township USDA secretaries, USDA Secretary-General U Htay Oo made a speech on the active cooperation of the members in building a modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation and striving for organization work to increase the strength of members, and CEC Member U Thein Nyunt clarified the point to be observed.

Next, the USDA members and townelders gave suggestions and the Secretary-General gave the concluding remarks. — MNA

CASH DONATED: Dieter Tancre and Susan of Germany recently donated K 100,000 to the funds of Hninzigon Home for the Aged. The photo shows the well-wisher handing over the donation to Joint-Treasurer U Maung Maung Gyi of the home. — MNA
Chinese President stresses education to cultivate morality

BEIJING, 28 April — The Chinese Government needs to invest more in education to foster a highly ethical nation, says Chinese President Hu Jintao in the latest Qiushi (Seeking Truth From Facts) magazine.

The article, entitled “Firmly Fostering a Socialist Ethics Concept on Honours and Disgraces”, outlines how the government should put education at the top of its agenda. Cultural undertakings should be facilitated to offer products that enlighten the public, he says in the article which is taken from his speech to annual session of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in March. The ability of learning, experiment and innovation is the important quality in cultivating talented people, he says. According to Hu, Communist Party officials and the masses, especially the youth, should maintain socialist morality in line with the Eight Honours and Disgraces:

— Love the country; do it no harm
— Serve the people; never betray them
— Follow science; discard superstition
— Be diligent; not indolent
— Reunited, help each other; make no gains at other’s expense
— Be honest and trustworthy; do not sacrifice ethics for profit
— Be disciplined and law-abiding; not chaotic and lawless
— Live plainly, work hard; do not wallow in luxuries and pleasures.

American faces charges for molesting underage girls in Cambodia

PHNOM PENH, 28 April — A 49-year-old American, charged with molesting underage girls in Cambodia, was sent to San Francisco on Wednesday from Cambodia to face criminal charges, US Embassy here said on Thursday.

Michael John Koklich was arrested on 17 February by the Cambodian National Police in Phnom Penh on suspicion of sexually exploiting two girls, ages 11 and 13. Koklich, also known as Michael Light, is accused in a two-court indictment handed-down 28 March by a grand jury in San Francisco of engaging in illicit sexual conduct in foreign places, a charge that carries a maximum sentence of up to 30 years in prison, the statement of the embassy said.

Earlier this week, the Cambodian Government expelled Koklich, paving the way for his return to the United States. He expected to make his initial appearance in federal court on Thursday.

Koklich is one of the first northern California residents prosecuted on child sex tourism charges under the provisions of the PROTECT Act. The PROTECT Act substantially strengthened federal laws against predatory crimes involving children outside the United States by adding new crimes, increasing sentences and modifying the burden of proof requirements for federal prosecutors to bring charges.

2,000 villagers flee Indonesian volcano

JAKARTA, 28 April — Nearly 2,000 villagers fled the Mount Merapi in Indonesia’s Central Java Province Thursday as authorities warned of possible eruption in the near future. The villagers looked for temporary shelters in safer place and left their homes in two villages on the slope of the volcano in Klaten Regency, reported the Detikcom news website.

Local authorities put the number of refugees at 1,972 from Sidorejo and Tegalmulyo villages. But thousands more villagers refused to leave their homes worrying that their properties, including cattle, will be stolen.

The volcano, located some 600 kilometres east of Jakarta, sputted dusts earlier in the day, which volcanologists believed was another sign of eruption.

Philippine police seize grenades, cans of teargas in Manila

MANILA, 28 April — Philippine police on Thursday confiscated a cache of explosives and ammunition illegally stored in a residential house in Marikina City, east part of Metro Manila. Elements of the police’s Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit in the National Capital Region recovered the explosives during a raid at No 21 Champagne Street in SSS Village, according to a report of radio DZMM.

Among the explosives confiscated at the residence were five pieces of hand grenades, a rifle grenade, several cans of teargas, various types of ammunition, a roll of detonating cord, blasting caps and other bomb-making ingredients, the report quoted police as saying.

Aiming for Guinness record, Georgian wrestler pulls 4.5 tons with left ear

TBILISI, 27 April — A young Georgian wrestler pulled two Ford minibuses tied together and weighing 4.5 tons over a distance of 41 meters and 10 centimeters, in an attempt to make a new entry into the Guinness Book of World Records. The two minibuses were chained together and linked to a nylon rope attached to Lasha Pataraia’s left ear. “I was sure that I could fulfill this task. And I want to beat this (new) record soon,” Pataraiia told reporters following his performance. A video recording of Pataraiia’s accomplishment was sent to Guinness World Records. Pataraiia already made Guinness World Records history. Three years ago, he pulled one minibus with his ears over a distance of 48 meters. Full text.—INTERNET
Putin says Russia oil giant becomes second largest in the world

MOSCOW, 28 April—Russia’s oil giant Gazprom has become the second largest oil company in the world, President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday in the Siberia city of Tomsk.

“Yesterday, Gazprom became the second largest company in the world in its sector, after Exxon-Mobil, and the fourth largest in the world in terms of capitalization, which has reached almost 260 billion US dollars,” Putin was quoted by Russian news agencies as saying when speaking at the Russian-German business forum in Tomsk.

Putin also noted Russia’s growing credit rating, saying: “The stock market index in Russia in 2005 increased almost 84 percent.” This indicates an improved investment climate in our country. We hope that our German partners will appreciate these achievements and choose to expand their presence on the Russian market,” he said.

Putin and visiting German Chancellor Angela Merkel met on 26-27 April in Tomsk for regular consultations. It is the second meeting between Putin and Merkel after the new German Cabinet was formed in November, and their first inter-state consultations.

China hopes Iran nuke issue solved with diplomatic means

BEIJING, 28 April—China hopes that the Iran nuclear issue would be settled through diplomatic means, Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan said here Wednesday.

“Under the current situation, there is still room to seek an appropriate settlement to the Iran nuclear issue through diplomatic negotiation. More efforts are needed to maintain such an important international consensus,” Cao told reporters after a meeting of defence ministers from members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Cao said Iran, as a member of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, enjoys the right to peaceful use of nuclear power, and should also perform relevant obligations and commitment.

He said China hopes Iran would respond positively to relevant resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the presidential statement adopted by the UN Security Council recently.

The 15-member UN Security Council on 28 March approved a non-binding presidential statement, asking Iran to suspend uranium enrichment activities within 30 days.

Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the IAEA, is expected to submit a report to the Security Council in upcoming days.

With the deadline looming, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad vowed to press ahead with the nuclear programme.

Cholera claims more than 900 lives in Angola

LUANDA, 28 April—The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) to Angola announced on Thursday here that cholera, which China successfully launches remote sensing satellite

TAIYUAN, 28 April—China successfully launched a remote sensing satellite and put it into preset orbit Thursday morning, the first of a series of space launches planned by China this year.

An official with the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology, a major developer of both the satellite and the rocket, said the 2.7-ton satellite will be mainly used for scientific experiment, survey of land resources, appraisal of crops and disaster prevention and alleviation.

An Indian labourer works inside a glass factory in Firozabad District, about 40 km (25 miles) from the northern Indian city of Agra, on 28 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Protesters rally outside a government building where four US Marines were appearing in a Manila courtroom on 28 April, 2006. Four US Marines accused of raping a 22-year-old Filipina, a case that has thrown US military relations with a former colony into the spotlight, appeared in court on Friday but did not enter a plea. —INTERNET

Italy restaurant fined for “cruel” lobster display

ROME, 28 April—An Italian restaurant was fined 688 euros ($855) for displaying live lobsters on ice to attract patrons, in an innovative application of an anti-cruelty law usually affecting to household pets.

A court in the northeastern city of Vicenza ruled the display was a form of abuse dooming the crustaceans to a slow death by suffocation. “We’re appealing,” said Giuseppe Scalesia, who runs La Conchiglia D’Oro, or “Golden Shell,” restaurant along with his brother Camillo. “They said that the lobsters, laying on the ice, suffer... They compared them in court to other animals, like cats and dogs.”

The case was brought by Gianpaolo Cecchetto, a former environmental activist, who took his two young children to the Vicenza restaurant in May 2002.

“They were shocked by the display,” Cecchetto told Reuters, adding he immediately got in touch with the ENPA national animal protection entity —“ENPA took care of the lawyers and legal proceedings.”

A tourist gives a kiss to a cow sculpture called ‘Louisanais’ by Italian artist Max Squillace displayed on the Opera square in Paris, on 26 April, 2006. —INTERNET

A lobster is seen on a bed of shells and rocks in an undated publicity photo. An Italian restaurant was fined 688 euros ($855) for displaying live lobsters on ice to attract patrons, in an innovative application of an anti-cruelty law usually affecting to household pets.—INTERNET

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Iran says ‘No’ to expected new UNSC demands

UNITED NATIONS, 28 April — Iran will not comply with a UN Security Council resolution aimed at curtailing its nuclear ambitions because its programmes pose no threat to global security, Teheran’s UN ambassador said on Thursday.

“If the Security Council decides to take decisions that are not within its competence, then Iran does not feel obliged to obey,” Ambassador Javad Zarif told reporters.

Mohamed ElBaradei, director-general of the UN’s Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, will submit a report on Friday expected to say Iran has refused to suspend uranium enrichment, a process that can produce fuel for nuclear warheads but also generate electricity.

“What I expect there will be a lot of pressure from the United States to impose another short-sighted decision on the Security Council” Zarif said.

“I don’t need a crystal ball to predict that,” he said.

A non-binding Security Council statement on 29 March told Iran to suspend uranium enrichment efforts the West suspects are part of a secret nuclear weapons programme but Iran says are aimed at generating electricity.

US Ambassador John Bolton said the United States and its allies want to put the demands in the March statement into a resolution under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter, which would be legally binding.

Zarif insisted Iran had to defy a bad decision. Particularly since ElBaradei and others had said Teheran’s nuclear programme was not an imminent threat.

“Then Iran would be violating its obligations under the UN Charter because a Chapter 7 resolution by definition is mandatory,” Bolton said.

Japan donates over 13,000 tons of food to Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, 28 April — Ethiopia’s relief authorities said Thursday the Japanese Government has donated 13,880 tons of relief food worth over 3.7 million US dollars to help people in need of emergency relief assistance in the Horn of Africa country.

The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency (DPAA) said in a statement that it had received the wheat grain and was making preparations to distribute it for those in need.

The statement said the relief made available by the Japanese Government would significantly contribute to meet the emergency relief needs of drought-hit people in rural areas.

Apart from the assistance it provides in development projects and the supply of agricultural inputs, the Japanese Government provided emergency relief worth over 9.3 million dollars in 2002, and over 1.8 million dollars each in 2003 and 2004, it said.

Musharraf says he is not US “poodle”

LONDON, 28 April — Pakistan’s President Pervez Musharraf has rejected accusations he is a Western “poodle”, saying his fight in the US against Islamic militants is for his country’s benefit, not for the United States or Britain.

“I am nobody’s poodle,” he said in an interview with Britain’s Guardian newspaper on Friday. “I have enough strength of my own to lead.”

“When you talk about fighting terrorism or extremism, I am not doing that for the US or Britain. I am doing it for Pakistan.”

Musharraf, an important ally in the US-led war on terrorism, has faced repeated opposition protests about his relationship with US President George W. Bush.

A 10,000-strong crowd gathered in the central Punjab region last month to hear opposition leader Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman call a visit by Bush an attempt at “enslaving the Pakistani nation and rewarding General Musharraf for his patriotism to America”. Newspapers have carried critical pieces on US foreign policy in Pakistan and one has a “Mush & Bush” column lampooning the two leaders’ relationship.

Musharraf said if he had the “teeth” to bite back at his Western allies, Musharraf said: “Yes sir, I personally do — a lot of teeth. Sometimes the teeth do not have to be shown. Pragmatism is required in international relations.”

Blast kills three Italian soldiers, one Romanian in Iraq

ROME, 28 April — Three Italian soldiers and one Romanian were killed Thursday when a roadside bomb hit their convoy in southern Iraq, the Italian Defence Ministry said. A fourth Italian soldier was seriously injured, the ministry said in a statement.

The explosion occurred in the city of Nassiriya, where the Italian contingent in Iraq is based.

Over 2,000 Italian troops are stationed in Nassiriya.

April deadliest this year for GIs in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 27 April — An American soldier was killed in a roadside bombing north of Baghdad, the US military said Friday, making April the deadliest month for American forces in Iraq this year.

Al-Qaeda’s No. 2 leader issued a video saying that hundreds of suicide bombings in Iraq have “broken the back” of the US military — the latest in a volley of messages by the terror network’s most prominent figures.

American troops, acting on tips from Iraqi intelligence, meanwhile, killed the reputed al-Qaeda boss of Samarra, where a Shi’ite shrine bombing two months ago nearly plunged the country into civil war.

The latest American death, which occurred Thursday evening, brought the number of US troops who have died this month in Iraq to at least 69. — Internet

Fiat lends James Bond bulldozer to chase villain

MILAN, 28 April — British secret agent James Bond has chased the world’s most dangerous villains in everything from cars to spaceships, but in his latest adventure, his vehicle of choice will be a bulldozer.

In the opening scene of “Casino Royale,” the 21st installment of the popular movie franchise, Bond will pursue his latest enemy in a four-wheel W190 bulldozer supplied by Fiat, the Italian industrial group.

Although its vehicles have appeared in a number of movies including the Alfa Romeo Spider in “The Graduate”, it is the first time that Fiat will have one starring in a Bond movie.

“We are very happy and proud of it,” said spokeswoman Silvia Cassani, who assured that none of the bulldozers, excavators or loaders supplied to the movie’s producers were destroyed in the mayhem usually associated with a Bond action scene. Cassani said the product placement was part of Fiat’s advertising efforts as it recovered from a debilitating crisis suffered a few years ago.

She said the movie, starring Daniel Craig, the first blond Bond, was a good medium to advertise the bulldozer made by New Holland. Fiat’s construction equipment division, even though Bond’s fans were mostly young males interested in the latest gadgetry.

“We have a diverse clientele,” she said. “We don’t just have old farmers.”

Ford Motor will also be using the movie to promote the Aston Martin, which will be driven by Bond after being behind the wheel of a BMW 750iL in previous adventures.

Production officials on the set of the movie, scheduled for release by Sony Corp’s Columbia Pictures in November, were unavailable for comment.

Actor Daniel Craig near London’s Tower Bridge. — Internet

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Aymen al-Zawahiri, an Egyptian militant believed to be hiding in Afghanistan or Pakistan, said that US and British forces had bogged down in Iraq and “have achieved nothing but loss, disaster... — Internet

A Boeing Delta II rocket lifts off its launch pad in Vandenberg Air Force Base, California on 28 April, 2006. The rocket successfully placed NASA’s CloudSat and Calipso satellites into orbit. — Internet

A 10,000-strong crowd gathered in the central Punjab region last month to hear opposition leader Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman call a visit by Bush an attempt at “enslaving the Pakistani nation and rewarding General Musharraf for his patriotism to America”. Newspapers have carried critical pieces on US foreign policy in Pakistan and one has a “Mush & Bush” column lampooning the two leaders’ relationship.

Asked by the Guardian if he had the “teeth” to bite back at his Western allies, Musharraf said: “Yes sir, I personally do — a lot of teeth. Sometimes the teeth do not have to be shown. Pragmatism is required in international relations.”

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ASEAN, Indian officials meet to discuss cooperation issues

HANOI, 29 April — The 8th ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meeting opened in Laos' capital Vientiane on Friday, focusing on reviewing cooperation programmes between the two sides, the Vietnam News Agency reported Friday.

During the two-day meeting, delegates are to touch upon cooperation programmes implemented by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India, including those on reducing development disparities between the newer and older members of the 10-member block, and within the framework of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

The ASEAN delegates will ask India to contribute one million US dollars to the ASEAN Development Fund for the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme, which centres on deepening regional integration and narrowing the development gap among member countries, particularly the least developed ones.

In addition, the ASEAN will ask India to provide five million dollars to the ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund for the implementation of six initiatives, including the construction of English language centres in the newest ASEAN members, and the establishment of an information exchange network between them.

During the meeting, senior officials from India, the ASEAN, the block's secretariat are also to mention negotiations of building an ASEAN-India free trade area, and fights against terrorism and transnational crimes.

MNA/Xinhua

Scientists create artificial insects eye

LOS ANGELES, 29 April — Scientists at the University of California, Berkeley, said on Thursday that they have created a new mechanical eye, which looks and works like an insect's eye.

The eye's many lenses and curved shape give it a wide field of view, as well as super-fast motion detection and image recognition, the researchers reported in the April 28 issue of the journal Science.

Minute cameras and motion sensors with these types of lenses could have medical, industrial and military applications, according to the researchers. Insects have multiple imaging units called "ommatidia" that are pointed in different directions. Of the many different types of insect eyes, a bee's eye is most similar to the new mechanical eye, they said.

Just like pins in a pincushion or a dragonfly's 30,000 ommatidia, the team's artificial ommatidia are each oriented at a slightly different angle. The researchers have shown that the lenses and waveguides of the artificial eyes focus and conduct light in the same way as an insect's eye.

"The lenses and waveguides are the most important part of the system," said Luke Lee, the principal investigator of the study.

"People have said that it would be totally impossible to create them with an angle, but now that we've done it, we're ready to integrate imaging or chemical sensing into the eyes," Lee said.

While conventional microfabrication techniques are expensive and use high temperatures, Lee and his team borrowed techniques from an optoelectronic imaging device. Then, they arranged the ommatidia around a dome, projecting outwards in all directions. Of the many different types of insect eyes, a bee's eye is most similar to the new mechanical eye, they said.

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MNA/Xinhua

Miss Namibia loses crown after her marital status discovered

JOHANNESBURG, 29 April — Miss Namibia Leefa Shiikwa has been stripped of her crown after her marital status was discovered by the home affairs department of that country, a South African newspaper reported on Friday.

Namibia's Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration presented the pageant organizers with documentation, proving that Shiikwa had been married before entering the contest, said the Johannesburg-based daily The Star.

The newspaper quoted the pageant's national director Connie Maritz as saying that a decision had been taken to "terminate her contract and withdraw her title as Miss Namibia". She said the title would remain vacant until the crowning of the new Miss Namibia on 20 May. All contestants have to be single, and pageant finalists enter into a contract containing a statement to that effect, according to the organizers.

MNA/Xinhua

A villager pull a cart full of grass to feed his cattle as Mount Merapi is seen on the background in Gumuk village, Central Java, Indonesia, on 28 April, 2006. The rumbling volcano is spewing volcanic ash and magma has fully covered its crater, and a powerful eruption could come any day, a scientist said.—INTERNET

27 feared drowned in Lake Victoria

DAR-ES-SALAAM, 29 April — At least 27 people including seven crew members have gone missing with a cargo vessel that was feared to have capsized during a storm on Friday last week in Lake Victoria. Up to Thursday this week, none of the missing has been rescued nor has a single body been recovered from the world's second largest freshwater lake situated in northern Tanzania. Local media reported on Friday that the boat was travelling from Bukoba to Mwanza, both Tanzanian towns along the lake shores. English newspaper Daily News quoted acting Kagera Regional Police Commander David ole-Saibullu as saying that the 20-ton cargo vessel had left Bukoba last Friday night around midnight local time.—MNA/Xinhua

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LOS ANGELES, 29 April — Scientists at the University of California, Berkeley, said on Thursday that they have created a new mechanical eye, which looks and works like an insect's eye.

The eye's many lenses and curved shape give it a wide field of view, as well as super-fast motion detection and image recognition, the researchers reported in the April 28 issue of the journal Science.

Minute cameras and motion sensors with these types of lenses could have medical, industrial and military applications, according to the researchers. Insects have multiple imaging units called "ommatidia" that are pointed in different directions. Of the many different types of insect eyes, a bee's eye is most similar to the new mechanical eye, they said.

Just like pins in a pincushion or a dragonfly's 30,000 ommatidia, the team's artificial ommatidia are each oriented at a slightly different angle. The researchers have shown that the lenses and waveguides of the artificial eyes focus and conduct light in the same way as an insect's eye.

"The lenses and waveguides are the most important part of the system," said Luke Lee, the principal investigator of the study.

"People have said that it would be totally impossible to create them with an angle, but now that we've done it, we're ready to integrate imaging or chemical sensing into the eyes," Lee said.

While conventional microfabrication techniques are expensive and use high temperatures, Lee and his team borrowed techniques from an optoelectronic imaging device. Then, they arranged the ommatidia around a dome, projecting outwards in all directions. Of the many different types of insect eyes, a bee's eye is most similar to the new mechanical eye, they said.

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Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence and Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brig-Gen Thein Zaw cut the ribbon to open Exhibition to mark 5th Myanmar ICT Week-2006. (News on Page 1) — MNA

Lt-Gen Myint Swe of Ministry of Defence visits booths at the Exhibition to mark 5th Myanmar ICT Week-2006. (News on Page 1) MYANMAR INFO-TECH

Myanmar Sea Fisheries Association set up

YANGON, 29 April — Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein delivered an address at the ceremony to set up Myanmar Sea Fisheries Association under Myanmar Fisheries Federation at Thiri Annawa Hall of the federation in Insein Township this morning.

YANGON, 29 April — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Taung received Chairman of Global Project 21 Co Ltd Mr Ha Quan Ho and party of the Republic of Korea at the ministry yesterday afternoon. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Maung Khin Win, 18, stepped on a mine planted by the terrorists beside Kanyutkwin-Meikithlin Road near Ywamagi Village in Pyu Township, Bago Division on 25 April. Due to the explosion of the mine, he was wounded in his left leg and knee and toes of his left leg were cut.

Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint addresses opening of Boxing Coaching Course Level I. — SPED

One person wounded in mine explosion in Pyu

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Myanmar, a sovereign nation under own monarchs

Myanmar people value their nation’s independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity much. King Anawrahta founded the First Myanmar Empire in 1044; King Bayinnaung, the Second Myanmar Empire in 1551; and King Alaungphaya, the Third Myanmar Empire in 1752. All the three empires saw strong national unity, economy and Tatmadaw. Myanmar was so glorious and powerful during the times that she won the respect of her neighbours. History of the empires shows the nation’s territory during the times, and gives us new vigour and strong sense to appreciate the value of our own citizens.

The period under enslavement

The First Anglo-Myanmar War broke out in 1824 in which Myanmar had to cede Rakhine region including Yanbye, Thandwe and Mannaung and Taninthayi region including Ye, Myeik and Dawei. The Second Anglo-Myanmar War in 1852 witnessed the loss of lower Myanmar to armed British occupation. After the Third Anglo-Myanmar War in 1885, the entire Myanmar fell under colonialist subjugation, together with the loss of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, followed by enslavement lasting over 100 years.

Independence and sovereignty

The result of the national solidarity, consolidated by the brilliant efforts of the visionary national race leaders and the people and the Tatmadaw, was the signing of the Panglong Agreement on 12 February 1947, the foundation, from which Myanmar has become an independent and sovereign state again. However, Myanmar lost some of her territories due to colonialist occupation if we compare with her territory in 1948 and 1752.

The past eras and experiences

The Tatmadaw with the participation of the people successfully drove out the Kuomintang troops that intruded into Myanmar territory in the easternmost regions in 1949. The Tatmadaw had to save the nation that nearly lost her independence once again resulting from the split between the political parties in 1958. In 1988, a brawl between some persons at a café led the people to stage street demonstrations, followed by colonialist-instigated disturbances threatening the very existence of the nation that was about to lose her independence and sovereignty.

Hence, the Tatmadaw saved the nation again. Up to now, the Tatmadaw has been ensuring national security, peace and stability and development of economy and human resources, developing the country many times during the 17-year period from 1988 to 2005 than it was in the period of 40 years from 1948 to 1988.

National security according to the changing eras

Today’s national goal is a peaceful, modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic state, while “non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity, perpetuation of sovereignty, uplift of national prestige and integrity, vitalization of patriotism and national development and modernization” are the national interests.

National security covers the task of successfully serving the national interests and providing protection against perpetration to destroy Myanmar. When it comes to the word “security” many people think it doesn’t concern them but it is the responsibility of an armed institution. Our national security concerns not only the armed forces, but all the national races living in the Union. We all have the responsibility in this task as it needs collective efforts.

A study of national interests and national security

Before World War I, the British designated national interests as the setting up of colonies all around the world for economic progress. But they used colonialism with beautiful words — to civilize the global peoples. Many small nations including Myanmar fell under subjugation while being forced to learn the British way of civilization and their culture.

After World War II, America emerged as a global power on the world stage. America materialized its national interests — expand its military, economic and political influence in many parts of the world while trying to contain the Soviet Union — under the titles “anti-communism, democracy and freedom, and international observance of the American values”. After the Cold War, the US substituted the word “communism” with “terrorism” and “oppressive governments”.

A thorough look at US military’s acts in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Bush administration’s unlawful spying of its own citizens show that the US cannot observe its own values although they are decorated with beautiful words “democracy, human rights and self-determination”.

In the book “US National Security — Policy Makers, Processes and Politics” compiled by Sam C Sarkesian, it is said that if necessary, the US will use military force in laying down policies and programmes for national security for successful realization of its own national interests; that its foreign policy includes the use of negotiations and diplomatic means; and that its priorities for security cover -

(1) the task of defending the motherland, vitalizing the policy,
(2) extending, maintaining and propagating democracy and transparency.

The work programmes of the National Security Strategy stated in the book are-

(1) in protecting the motherland as vital interest, arms and manpower, pre-emptive strike, and natural resources will be used at full capacity,
(2) democracy system will be nurtured as critical interest,
(3) a situation must be created to gain the upper hand as serious interest. If it fails to do so, measures will be taken considering that democracy is under threat.

Then, it can be assessed what sorts of policies the US is pursuing for national values, national interests and national security.

The US and its allies have invaded Afghanistan and Iraq under the pretext of the policy of the national security that the two countries are posing grave threats to world security and US security and they have to take necessary
steps to introduce democracy to the two countries. They claimed that Afghanistan and Iraq have enjoyed democracy and human rights with their governments elected freely by their peoples. However, the two countries in practice are experiencing fightings and bomb blasts every day that have caused deaths of tens of thousands of innocent people.

Myanmar being located in a geographically and strategically place, they are resorting to various means to crush the nation. Regarding Myanmar’s internal affairs, in harmonious collusion with terrorist groups in exile, foreign radio stations and certain national politicians, they are levelling accusations at Myanmar such as human rights violations, forced labour, child soldiers, forced relocation, refugees, displaced workers, traffickding in persons, rapes, women’s rights, punishments without trials, tortures, rights of ethnic minorities, insufficiency of food, education and health problems, religious faiths, freedom of expression, rights to set up organizations, land mines, production of narcotic drugs, political reforms, and the National Convention. In particular, they are attempting to mislead Myanmar people into thinking highly of their values, democracy and freedom, and to inculcate the people with their ideas. Indeed, they do not practise real humanitarianism but are levelling accusations one after another through various points of view if they cannot exploit other nations’ situations. Perhaps, they will make new accusations on different subjects. All their acts are just for their own interests, not for others’. So, Myanmar national people should do what is necessary in the interests of the motherland.

A glance at US National Security Strategy (March 2006)

It says the US will have other nations admire American Values and make attempts as international leadership on the pretext of the drive to help the world see greater freedom. In the process, it will have to use the tactic of application of democracy more effectively by removing the governments they cannot manipulate.

Bush administration’s fundamental concept is that if the American democracy is practised and US Values are accepted in all the nations especially in those with American interests, the anti-US groups will be weak and the US will be safer as there will be no place in which the anti-US terrorists can take shelter. That is why the US government is trying to topple the governments that support terrorists and the governments that do not get involved in terrorist acts but refuse to accept its influence, branding them as dictatorships nations, evil nations, and oppressive governments. But it can be noticed that the countries, however much their conditions are posing dangers, are not stated in the list.

In implementing the strategy, the US will use the following political, economic and diplomatic means and others as necessary.

(1) to oppose human rights violations.
(2) it will encourage democracy activists in other nations and hold high-level meetings at the White House, the governmental office, and the US embassies.
(3) it will provide foreign aid for free elections and prevalence of law and order, and enabling civilian organizations to step up work for human rights, women’s rights, freedom of press and freedom of religious faiths.
(4) it will provide assistance of armed forces, conduct military training and controls for human rights-related cases of democracy activists.
(5) it will impose sanctions against targeted countries.
(6) it will dissuade other nations from providing assistance for targeted countries.
(7) it will persuade its close democratic nations to force targeted countries to enhance freedom, democracy and human rights.
(8) it will provide funds for the nations in the Middle East and northern Africa that are on the path towards democracy.
(9) it will set up friendly ties with NGOs and civilian organizations and support their functions.
(10) it will cooperate with international organizations such as UN, regional bodies, African Union and EU for progress of democratization process.
(11) it will criticize and condemn the organizations that are violating human rights and democracy profusely.
(12) it will give encouragement so that foreign investments are made and foreign assistance is provided for the countries that take measures for prevalence of law and order, wipe out bribery, and take responsibilities for democratic transition.

The US National Security Strategy is quite clear. In its own interests, it will interfere flagrantly in the internal affairs of Myanmar, North Korea, Iran, Syria, Cuba, Belarus and Zimbabwe.

Therefore, Myanmar national people who want to see Myanmar as a peaceful, modern and developed democratic nation with flourishing discipline should build and protect their own interests. The citizens and national races are to build a democratic nation through consolidated unity. The countries that ill-treated Myanmar for over a hundred years will never show positive attitude towards Myanmar until the country is under their domination. But, we could not believe they will be nice to Myanmar even if the country acts to their liking.

Myanmar has stood for thousands of years with various national races. Myanmar is a nation with independence, sovereignty, territory, own culture and customs. It has a large number of citizens capable of making firm and quick decisions with high intellectual power. It has natural resources in abundance. What is needed is just to make harmonious efforts. All the national people are to protect national interests by themselves and preserve Myanmar Values forever.

There is no need to ask if we Myanmars want to be masters or slaves. We are masters.

Translation: TMT + MS
Myanma Alin, Kyemon: 29-4-2006
MMCWA holds dinner to mark its…

Division and K 150,000 to its runner-up Yangon Division, K 100,000 to Mandalay Division and K 50,000 each consolation prize to winners Mon State and Mandalay Division.

Secretary of MMCWA Daw Wai Wai Tha gave the environmental health award winner Mandalay Division K 100,000.

CEC member Daw Aye Aye presented gifts to those who contributed to publishing Myitta Sanyay magazine. CEC member Daw Htwe Htwe Nyunt also gave gifts to artists who participated in the video drama covered by the association and the music band. Later, those present were served with dinner. — MNA

The second day session of 16th Annual General Meeting of Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association in progress. (News reported) — MNA

MMCWA President Daw Khin Khin Win expresses thanks at the dinner to mark 16th AGM of MMCWA. — MNA

MMCWA President Daw Khin Khin Win presents gifts to Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo. — MNA

The amounts of rainfall observed at (09:30) hours MST today, at the following stations set the new maximum the (24) hours rainfalls records for the month of April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Station</th>
<th>New rainfall Record (mm)</th>
<th>Previous Record (mm)</th>
<th>Last Record Date</th>
<th>Record Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hinthada</td>
<td>191 7.52</td>
<td>49 1.91</td>
<td>29-4-94</td>
<td>(39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mingaladon</td>
<td>123 4.84</td>
<td>118 4.65</td>
<td>14-4-99</td>
<td>(60)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hmawby</td>
<td>114 4.49</td>
<td>74 2.91</td>
<td>28-4-68</td>
<td>(54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bago</td>
<td>92 3.62</td>
<td>90 3.54</td>
<td>20-4-67</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Pyay</td>
<td>88 3.47</td>
<td>48 1.89</td>
<td>20-4-84</td>
<td>(42)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Toungoo</td>
<td>55 2.16</td>
<td>42 1.65</td>
<td>2-4-77</td>
<td>(42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Rainfall Record (Issued on 29th April 2006)

Gusts of wind destroy roofs of factories, houses in Hlinethaya Township

NAW PYI TAW, 29 April — Sudden gusts of wind alongside heavy rainfall destroyed roofs of five factories in industrial zones and more than 200 houses in Hlinethaya Township at about 10 pm yesterday.

The wind destroyed the roofs and walls of Myanmar April Garment Factory, Myanmar Sunny Slippers Factory, Wonder Confectionery, Hiawara Blanket Factory and Max Soft Drink Factory in Industrial Zones-3&4 and over 200 houses in Ward-15, Ward-19, Shwe Linhan Village and Kazin Village, killing one person and injuring 21 others. Those injured have been sent to Yangon General Hospital and Hlinethaya People’s Hospital for treatment.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Brig-Gen Hla Htaw Win and officials concerned rushed to the scenes and supervised arrangements for opening relief camps for storm victims. — MNA
YANGON, 28 April — The occurrence of bird flu that broke out in 13 townships of Mandalay and Sagaing Divisions in early March this year, came to stop due to effective control measures taken by local authorities, division bird flu control committees, Myanmar Police Force, Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department, Health Department, Livestock Breeding Federation and livestock breeders.

The disease can be controlled in KhinU Township to maximum 34 days and in Kyaukse Township to minimum 20 days.

The personnel concerned found no avian-related fowl deaths and no evidence of the disease as they are checking chicken death rates at the farms, making diagnoses after a series of tests and conducting blood and other related tests.

After testing 625 blood samples and 60 trachea samples, no H5N1 has been found in Mandalay and Sagaing divisions up to now.

Selling and transporting of chicken, duck and eggs were temporarily prohibited in the disease-hit townships as soon as the flu broke out there.

Although the townships are still barred from doing inter-township trade of fowls and eggs, they are now permitted to conduct intra-township trade.

Poultry products were prohibited even in states and divisions free from avian flu. But now inter-region trade have been permitted in those states and divisions and they can transport fowls and eggs to the once affected townships. Up to yesterday, Shan State (South) transported sterilized 325,000 eggs to Mandalay and 107,000 sterilized eggs to Kyaukpadaung, and Ayeyawady Division transported 13,605 chicken, 320 ducks and 830,000 eggs to Yangon Division.

The products were transported under the permission of local authorities and bird flu control committee based on the certification of LBVD and regional laboratories.

The TV Myanmar is broadcasting and the dailies and weeklies are issuing control measures and instructions against the flu. As for the education campaign against the disease, flyers are being distributed and billboards erected. The LBVD will extend its field public education campaign and other related works in Shwebo and other regions in Sagaing Division with the assistance of Japanese government and in cooperation with UNICEF and the Health Department.

MNA
Annan calls for support for victims of Chernobyl

UNITED NATIONS, 28 April — UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Wednesday called for support for the victims of the Chernobyl Disaster.

In a statement marking the 20th anniversary of the Chernobyl Disaster, Annan pointed out that the sacrifices must never be forgotten. “Many hard lessons have been learned from Chernobyl, including the importance of providing the public with transparent, timely and credible information in the event of a catastrophe,” he said.

“Many hard lessons have been learned from Chernobyl, including the importance of providing the public with transparent, timely and credible information in the event of a catastrophe,” he said.

New York police start random search at city’s public schools

NEW YORK, 28 April — New York city police began random sweeps of public schools Wednesday as part of Mayor Michael Bloomberg’s crackdown on school violence, but the main items seized during the first day of searches were dozens of cell phones.

Cell phones have been banned from city schools for nearly 20 years, but now police plan on confiscating them along with other electronic devices from students during random searches.

Officers using mobile metal detectors are planning to show up unannounced at schools around the city and scan the students. A high school at Brooklyn was the primary target Wednesday. Police officers issued one summons for possession of a knife and a summons for possession of mace. They also confiscated 30 cell phones, but according to the Department of Education, the phones will be returned to students at the end of the day.

Some parents have expressed concern that they could lose a connection to their kids in an emergency. The Department of Education told principals this week that the devices should eventually be returned to students.

Azerbaijan says not to get involved in possible war against Iran

WASHINGTON, 28 April — Visiting Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev said on Wednesday that his country will not take part in any possible military operations against neighbouring Iran.

“Azerbaijan will not be engaged in any kind of potential operation against Iran and our officials in the past, including myself, have made (this) very clear,” Aliyev said. Aliyev told a seminar at the Council on Foreign Relations, an influential think tank in Washington.

“Therefore I think it is time to stop speculating on this issue,” Aliyev said.

Some parents have expressed concern that they could lose a connection to their kids in an emergency. The Department of Education told principals this week that the devices should eventually be returned to students.

Interpol to crackdown on stolen vehicles in Uganda

KAMPALA, 28 April — International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is to carry out a massive crackdown on stolen vehicles in the east African country, local media reported on Thursday.

Patrick Onyango, the acting police public relations officer, had confirmed that the Ugandan police were coordinating with their counterparts to recover thousands of stolen vehicles, although Elisabeth Kutesa, Ugandan CID director, had so far not given any comment on this subject.

“We have exchanged lists of wanted cars,” Onyango said, adding that the operation would kick off “very soon” in Uganda.

The crackdown, which has already taken place in Tanzania and Kenya, would next come to Uganda. The first phase of the crackdown, dubbed “Operation Makumi”, was carried out in Tanzania in the past two weeks and then shifted to Kenya on Monday, according to the Daily Monitor.

Workers replace a light fixture on the 103rd floor of the Empire State Building in New York on 11 April, 2006. As it turns 75 years old, the iconic building has fallen on hard times. But its supporters say it is also poised for a comeback. —INTERNET
Chinese liquor fetches record price at auction

GUANGZHOU, 28 April — A half-litre bottle of Wuliangye, a famed Chinese liquor, known as “baijiu”, was auctioned for a record price of 880,000 yuan (about 108,508 US dollars).

The baijiu came from a vat that had been stored for 90 years, while the vat itself has been used since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The buyer refused to be identified, said Liang Guoxing, chairman of Yinji Trading Development (Shenzhen) Co Ltd, organizer of the auction, which was held recently in Shenzhen, a boomsown near Hong Kong.

China has a long tradition of serving its unique clear liquor in small shot glass that are often gulped all at once at the dinner table. As clear as vodka baijiu has a taste all unto itself. Wuliangye and Maotai, both produced in Guizhou Province, in southwest China, are the two most famous brands which Chinese leaders use to toast distinguished guests at state banquets.

The Wuliangye brand known literally as “five-crop” brand is made by distilling two types of rice, wheat, corn and sorghum. The price paid for the bottle is a very lucky number as in Chinese eight is pronounced similar to the word for fortune. The auctioned bottle has an alcohol content of 60 per cent.

According to Liang, the money from the auctioned bottle will be used to finance the construction of three primary schools for a program called Project Hope. It’s designed to help children in the country’s poverty-hit areas to return to school.

DAS181 shows promise against bird flu in animals

NEW YORK, 28 April— A novel “sialidase fusion” protein effectively prevents and treats human and bird flu infection in animals, researchers report. The protein, known as DAS181, works by removing flu receptors found in the lungs.


“Investigations of DAS181 against the deadly (bird flu virus) in both tissue cultures as well as in animals are ongoing, and the results so far are very encouraging,” Yu added. However, “although promising, the safety and efficacy of DAS181 still need to be proven in humans by clinical trials”.

In the new study, DAS181 demonstrated potent antiviral activity against a panel of laboratory flu strains as well as those found in the community, the team reported in the journal Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.

Moreover, giving DAS181 up to 24 hours before exposure to the viruses protected cells from infection.

Similarly, treatment of mice with DAS181 prior to viral exposure significantly improved survival and lung function, the researchers found. Alternatively, giving the protein after virus exposure still prevented death and reduced lung disease.

DAS181 was also effective in a ferret model, which is thought to closely mimic human influenza, the investigators say.

“Preliminary data show that DAS181 is equally efficacious against parainfluenza virus, which is the cause of one of the three most severe respiratory infectious diseases in humans,” Yu commented.

Human trials of DAS181 are expected to begin later this year, Yu said. — MNA/Reuters

China’s pandas to celebrate first “snow winter” in Thailand

BANGKOK, 28 April — Chuang Chuang and Lin Hui, Chiang Mai Zoo’s super stars, may be celebrating their third anniversary in Thailand with blueprints of a new home — a 50 million baht (about 1.3 million US dollars’) worth habitat with falling snow.

The panda pair have been the zoo’s residents as “friendship ambassadors” from China since October 2003. During the past years, they have been living in air-conditioned house.

Although Chiang Mai City is the coolest region in the tropical country, the around-the-year hot season seems far from the changeful weather in their hometown, China’s Wei Long.

But starting in 2009, every winter there will be something extra to see: snow falling from the ceiling at the flick of a switch.

“The panda is actually an animal that lives in the snow,” Prasertsak Buntrakunpuntawee, the chief of the zoo’s panda programme, was quoted by local newspaper on Thursday as saying. “Providing them with cool temperatures and snow each winter will keep them happy — they love the snow!”

The zoo is now submitting plans for a new 50 million baht (about 1.3 million US dollars’) worth panda habitat to the government, he said. If approved, the two-year construction project will begin early next year.

Prasertsak said the pandas are well taken care of because the zoo recognize their importance as international diplomats, and it is not a role to be taken lightly.

“Our pair are important ambassadors to whom we pay great attention,” Prasertsak said. “It’s also to a great opportunity for us to learn more about the animals’ biology and help with panda conservation.”

Vitamins do not reduce pregnancy complication

BOSTON, 28 April — Treatment with the antioxidant Vitamins C and E does nothing to prevent the potentially pregnant women, and 400 international units of Vitamin E each day were just as likely to develop pre-eclampsia as the 942 who took placebo pills, according to the team, led by Alice Rumbold of Women’s and Children’s Hospital in North Adelaide.

MNA/Reuters

Bangladeshi salt farmers carry their goods from sea water towards a safer area after a storm in the Bay of Bengal intensified into a cyclone, near the shore Cox’s Bazar, 296 kilometers (185 miles) south of capital city of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 28 April, 2006. —INTERNET

Chinese liquor fetches record price at auction

GUANGZHOU, 28 April — A half-litre bottle of Wuliangye, a famed Chinese liquor, known as “baijiu”, was auctioned for a record price of 880,000 yuan (about 108,508 US dollars).

The baijiu came from a vat that had been stored for 90 years, while the vat itself has been used since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644).

The buyer refused to be identified, said Liang Guoxing, chairman of Yinji Trading Development (Shenzhen) Co Ltd, organizer of the auction, which was held recently in Shenzhen, a boomsown near Hong Kong.

China has a long tradition of serving its unique clear liquor in small shot glass that are often gulped all at once at the dinner table. As clear as vodka baijiu has a taste all unto itself. Wuliangye and Maotai, both produced in Guizhou Province, in southwest China, are the two most famous brands which Chinese leaders use to toast distinguished guests at state banquets.

The Wuliangye brand known literally as “five-crop” brand is made by distilling two types of rice, wheat, corn and sorghum. The price paid for the bottle is a very lucky number as in Chinese eight is pronounced similar to the word for fortune. The auctioned bottle has an alcohol content of 60 per cent.

According to Liang, the money from the auctioned bottle will be used to finance the construction of three primary schools for a program called Project Hope. It’s designed to help children in the country’s poverty-hit areas to return to school.

DAS181 shows promise against bird flu in animals

NEW YORK, 28 April— A novel “sialidase fusion” protein effectively prevents and treats human and bird flu infection in animals, researchers report. The protein, known as DAS181, works by removing flu receptors found in the lungs.


“Investigations of DAS181 against the deadly (bird flu virus) in both tissue cultures as well as in animals are ongoing, and the results so far are very encouraging,” Yu added. However, “although promising, the safety and efficacy of DAS181 still need to be proven in humans by clinical trials”.

In the new study, DAS181 demonstrated potent antiviral activity against a panel of laboratory flu strains as well as those found in the community, the team reported in the journal Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.

Moreover, giving DAS181 up to 24 hours before exposure to the viruses protected cells from infection.

Similarly, treatment of mice with DAS181 prior to viral exposure significantly improved survival and lung function, the researchers found. Alternatively, giving the protein after virus exposure still prevented death and reduced lung disease.

DAS181 was also effective in a ferret model, which is thought to closely mimic human influenza, the investigators say.

“Preliminary data show that DAS181 is equally efficacious against parainfluenza virus, which is the cause of one of the three most severe respiratory infectious diseases in humans,” Yu commented.

Human trials of DAS181 are expected to begin later this year, Yu said. — MNA/Reuters

China’s pandas to celebrate first “snow winter” in Thailand

BANGKOK, 28 April — Chuang Chuang and Lin Hui, Chiang Mai Zoo’s super stars, may be celebrating their third anniversary in Thailand with blueprints of a new home — a 50 million baht (about 1.3 million US dollars’) worth habitat with falling snow.

The panda pair have been the zoo’s residents as “friendship ambassadors” from China since October 2003. During the past years, they have been living in air-conditioned house.

Although Chiang Mai City is the coolest region in the tropical country, the around-the-year hot season seems far from the changeful weather in their hometown, China’s Wei Long.

But starting in 2009, every winter there will be something extra to see: snow falling from the ceiling at the flick of a switch.

“The panda is actually an animal that lives in the snow,” Prasertsak Buntrakunpuntawee, the chief of the zoo’s panda programme, was quoted by local newspaper on Thursday as saying. “Providing them with cool temperatures and snow each winter will keep them happy — they love the snow!”

The zoo is now submitting plans for a new 50 million baht (about 1.3 million US dollars’) worth panda habitat to the government, he said. If approved, the two-year construction project will begin early next year.

Prasertsak said the pandas are well taken care of because the zoo recognize their importance as international diplomats, and it is not a role to be taken lightly.

“Our pair are important ambassadors to whom we pay great attention,” Prasertsak said. “It’s also to a great opportunity for us to learn more about the animals’ biology and help with panda conservation.”

MNA/Reuters

Vitamins do not reduce pregnancy complication

BOSTON, 28 April — Treatment with the antioxidant Vitamins C and E does nothing to prevent the potentially pregnancy complication known as pre-eclampsia, an Australian study showed on Wednesday.

Pre-eclampsia can lead to high blood pressure and other problems in pregnant women and is a major cause of death among pregnant women in developing countries.

It is responsible for 15 per cent of premature births in the United States.

The 935 first-time mothers who took 1,000 milligrams of Vitamin C and 400 international units of Vitamin E each day were just as likely to develop pre-eclampsia as the 942 who took placebo pills, according to the team, led by Alice Rumbold of Women’s and Children’s Hospital in North Adelaide.

MNA/Reuters

Bangladeshi salt farmers carry their goods from sea water towards a safer area after a storm in the Bay of Bengal intensified into a cyclone, near the shore Cox’s Bazar, 296 kilometers (185 miles) south of capital city of Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 28 April, 2006. —INTERNET
FIFA reject extension of Primera Liga

MAJOR, 29 April—FIFA rejected the extension of Primera Liga by a week on Friday, but Seville have been allowed to play the Sevilla-Barcelona match which was originally scheduled for 23 April. Instead, the match was held on Monday and the RFEF had asked for a change because they felt their professionalism as they play the Sevilla-Barcelona match which was originated scheduled for 23 April but was called off because of a waterlogged pitch.

Scolari pulls out of England job race

LISBON, 29 April—Portugal's Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari stunned the soccer world on Friday by withdrawing from the race to become England manager because of unbearable media intrusion.

In a news conference televised from Portugal's World Cup training site in Germany, Scolari said his plans would be open after 31 July when his contract with the Portuguese Football Federation ran out.

Scolari's decision was linked to his feelings for Portugal and the relentless media pressure since his name surfaced two days ago as the likely candidate to succeed Swede Sven-Goran Eriksson as England's manager. "There are 20 reporters outside my house now," he said. "If that is part of another culture, it is not part of my culture. I am not the coach, and will not be (England's) coach. "I don't want this situation involving England because in two days during which I was not coach, I never agreed to anything—life was invaded," Scolari said. "My privacy was totally under siege."

Scolari said the Press had made "absurd comparisons" of him and his wife with Eriksson and the Swede's partner, and how they dressed. "That's not part of my life and it never going to be."

Valenciennes back in Ligue 1

PARIS, 29 April—Valenciennes won promotion to Ligue 1 on Friday 13 years after being engulfed in France's biggest match-fixing case with Olympic Marseille.

The northern club won 3-0 at second-placed Sedan to secure a place in the top three with two games left to play.

The 1993 VA-OM scandal saw Valenciennes players bribed to lose a league game just days before Marseille were due to play in the Champions League final against AC Milan. Marseille beat Valenciennes 1-0 and clinched their fifth title.

Valenciennes were relegated and then demoted to the Third Division the following year for financial reasons before losing their professional status as they fell into the fourth in 1997. They started to climb back up the ladder when they were promoted to the Third Division in 2002, clinching the title and moving up to Ligue 2 at the end of last season.

The VA-OM case turned into a nightmare for Marseille a year after they became the first French club to win the European Cup.

They were stripped of their fifth consecutive Ligue 1 title after the scandal erupted in 1994 and demoted to the Second Division for financial reasons.

Portugal content with Scolari's rejection of England

LISBON, 29 April—The Portuguese Football Federation said on Friday it was happy with Brazilian coach Luiz Felipe Scolari's decision not to take over as England manager.

Scolari pulled out as a candidate for the England job after two days of media intrusional.

"We are very happy, the permanence of Mr Scolari at the World Cup was never in question," Portuguese Football Federation chairman Gilmorei Mandaill said. "What is in question is the future.

Mandaill said there was no pressure on him to make the decision, adding that Scolari had respected a "gentlemen's agreement" to talk to him before making any commitments to other parties.

He also said he was sure Scolari would make the right decision about his future when his contract with Portugal runs out after the World Cup. "He knows how to deal with the future and that is very important."

EU accuses Blatter of making “U” turn on promises

BRUSSELS, 29 April—A European Union lawmaker has accused FIFA president Sepp Blatter of making a U-turn on his promises to kick racism out of this year's World Cup.

"Mr Blatter has failed to live up to his earlier promises," Dutch MEP Emine Bozkurt said on Friday.

Last month world soccer's governing body announced draconian punishments to tackle racism ranging from match suspensions to points deductions and Blatter said the sanctions would be used against offending nations at the World Cup in Germany.

However, FIFA said on Tuesday that teams at the World Cup will not be docked points for racism by fans and the sanctions would only apply to players, coaches or team officials.

"Yes, (the sanction applies) if it (racism) is on the field of play, yes if it is on the technical bench or identified around the football pitch," said Blatter.

"But, when it comes to the World Cup public, you have an international audience and you don't know where they are sitting. How do you then identify if someone will be or won't be in favour or against (a team)?"
Chelsea clinched a second successive Premiership title

LONDON, 29 April—Chelsea clinched a second successive Premiership title with victory over Manchester United at Stamford Bridge. Chelsea defeated Manchester United 3-0.

And with only a point needed to secure the title, Chelsea made the perfect start when they went ahead inside five minutes. Frank Lampard’s corner was knocked forward by Drogba and Gallas stole it to head past the stranded Edwin Van der Sar.

There was a major scare for Chelsea and England two minutes later when John Terry was felled by a late tackle from Ferreira, but collapsed in again clutching the same right foot he broke against Portugal in Euro 2004.

Rooney looked in agony as he was strapped to a stretcher, leaving the field to sympathetic applause from anxious fans of both sides.

Chelsea’s title party started in earnest at the final whistle, with the worries over Rooney were a worry for those celebrating as well as the United fans forced to accept their Championship dreams were over for another season.

There was a major injury, but just as a second when Cole curled a finish inches wide after 54 minutes—but he made no mistake with a stunning individual effort six minutes later.

Colec took out Rio Ferdinand, Nemanja Vidic and Mikael Silvestre with a single turn before racing on to fire high past Van der Sar.

Desperate United boss Sir Alex Ferguson made a change after 64 minutes, sending on Ruud van Nistelrooy for the disappointing Cristiano Ronaldo.

Rooney was then involved in an incident that cast a huge shadow over England’s World Cup plans with 15 minutes left. He stumbled into an innocuous challenge with Ferreira, but collapsed in again clutching the same right foot he broke against Portugal in Euro 2004.

Rooney looked in agony as he was strapped to a stretcher, leaving the field to sympathetic applause from anxious fans of both sides.

Chelsea’s title party started in earnest at the final whistle, with the worries over Rooney were a worry for those celebrating as well as the United fans forced to accept their Championship dreams were over for another season.

Chelseas celebrate and captain John Terry lifts the Premiership trophy for the second successive year.
YANGON, 29 April — Nine township executives of Shan State (North) Lashio Township NLD resign. Nine township executives of Shan State (North) Lashio Township NLD resigned, saying that their party became isolated by the aim of serving the interests of people and the country and they could not cooperate with a group of people who were political opportunists. Thus they resigned from the NLD party. Similarly, U Sein Maung, township organizing committee member of Lashio NLD and township organizer U Khin Maung Win resigned from the party and party duties on 7 and 14 April respectively and they sent their resignations to Lashio Township Multiparty Democracy General Election Sub-Commission Office. There were 16 members in Lashio Township NLD and there remain only five members because 11 had already resigned from the party. — MNA

NLD underestimates internal strength, relies on external elements It ignores national developments holding negative views It stands alog from people and gets itself isolated

YANGON, 29 April — Nine township executives of Shan State (North) Lashio Township NLD resigned in masse, close office NLD distances itself from people by keeping aloof from regional development projects Those within NLD wedded to personality cult, rely on external elements

4th Waxing of Kason 1368 ME
YANGON President Daw Khin Khin Win presents the third prize to Rakhine State through an official — MNA

Storm Warning

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