True patriotism

* It is very important for everyone of the nation regardless of the place he lives to have strong Union Spirit.
* Only Union Spirit is the true patriotism all the nationalities will have to safeguard.

Industry-1 Minister inspects factories in Sagaing Division

YANGON, 21 May—Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung on 19 May inspected the Winthuza Shop in Salingyi, Sagaing Division and gave necessary instructions.

* Serve the interest of the State with goodwill.
* Make relentless efforts to produce more spare parts.
* Try to get more share holders.

At the shop, the minister looked into sale of products of the Ministry of Industry-1, physic nut oil used stoves, sewing machines, bicycles and storage of items.

In the evening, the minister inspected weaving machines and various kinds of textiles at Salingyi Textiles Factory and attended to the needs.

At the briefing hall, Factory Manager U Khan Maung reported to the minister on production, distribution and storage of raw materials.

The minister stressed the need to practise thrifty, to follow instructions of the ministry and to be loyal to own departments and industries.

ACCOMPANIED by Deputy Commander of North-West Command Brig-Gen Tin Maung Ohn and local authorities, the minister proceeded to Spirulina Medicine Production Centre (Twintaing).

At the briefing hall, the minister heard a report presented by an official on matters related to production of the factory.

Next, Factory Manager Dr Min Thein reported on production process of the factory, target to produce 145 tons of Spirulina in 2006-2007 and other salient points.

The minister gave instructions on meeting the GMP standard, giving proper supervision and exceeding the target.

At the Dyeing Factory in Monywa, the minister viewed round designed garments and the maintenance of the factory, and inspected Winthuza Shop.

Next, they went on to Chindwin Yadana Hall of Monywa Industrial Zone where they met with the industrialists.

At the meeting, Factory Manager U Maung Maung of the Iron Foundry reported on production of the factory and Secretary of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myo Myint gave a supplementary report.

After fulfilling the requirements, the minister emphasized the need to serve the interest of the State with goodwill, to make relentless efforts to produce more spare parts and try to get more share holders.

At the Foundry Shop, they viewed round spare parts and gave instructions.

At the Machine Shop, the minister and party inspected production of spare parts and gave necessary instructions.

On arrival at the Forging Shop, they looked into machines, mini-tractors and spare parts.

At the Foundry Shop, they viewed round spare parts and gave instructions.

AFTERWARDS, the minister and party inspected demonstration of fire engines assembled by CDS Automobile Factory.

Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung inspects products of factories in Monywa Industrial Zone. — INDUSTRY-1

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
**PERSPECTIVES**

**Monday, 22 May, 2006**

**Rural development through better transport**

In Myanmar, the majority of the population live in rural areas. The government is taking all necessary steps for the well-being of rural people. The measures include sufficient supply of irrigation water and clean water. Now, 30 townships in the arid zone of Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay divisions have an easy access to potable water.

At the same time, the government has been accelerating the establishment of infrastructures in the education, health and economic spheres in rural areas. And it has been building village-to-village roads and river and creek spanning bridges to ensure better transport that plays a major role in the drive for rural development.

The inauguration of Mu River spanning bridge (Thaphanseik) in Kyunhla Township, Shwebo District, and Kyunhla-Thaphanseik gravel road took place on 7 May. In the past, the old bridge was in poor condition caused by wear and tear and local people had to rely on the Mu River to transport motor vehicles on a raft to reach the other bank.

Thanks to the newly-reconstructed facility, 352 feet long and 18 feet wide, automobiles can cross the river easily. It was built with the contribution of K 20.5 million from local entrepreneurs and K 9.5 million by a well-wisher entrepreneur.

The old Kyunhla-Thaphanseik road was just a laterite one linking old Kyunhla and Thitaybin Village. Now, the over-nine-mile section of the road has been upgraded to a gravel one with the contribution of an entrepreneur and local residents.

So, the people along the road inclusive of those living in Ywathi and Shansu Villages in Kyunhla Township now have easy access to urban areas.

It is believed that wellwishers, local people and social organizations will continue to join hands with the government in the building of roads and bridges, the fundamental requirement for the development of rural areas.

**Minister for Industry-I U Aung Thaung oversees progress in construction of Textile Factory (Project) in Pakokku. (News reported) — INDUSTRY-1**

**New building of Basic Education Post-Primary School handed over in Htantabin**

YANGON, 21 May — A new building of Basic Education Post-Primary School donated by Yangon Division Union Solidarity and Development Association and Shonan Association for Building School House of Japan was handed over to the Ministry of Education at Katwe Village in Htantabin Township, Yangon North District, this morning. CEC member of USDA (Yangon Division In-charge) Vice-Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, Secretary of Yangon Division USDA U Aye Myint, Director-General of No 3 Basic Education Department U Aye Kyu and Chairman of Shonan Association for Building School House of Japan Mr Yamada Sakai formally opened the building.

The vice-mayor and Mr Yamada Sakai gave speeches on the occasion.

Afterwards, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa and Director-General U Aye Kyu of No 3 BED handed over related documents to Township Education Officer Daw San Yin Win. The TEO spoke words of thanks.

The USA CEC member and party inspected the building and distributed textbooks to schoolchildren and grew physic nut plants in Katwe Village.

**Respects paying ceremony held at Yankin Education College**

YANGON, 20 May — The fifth respects paying ceremony of Yankin Education College of the Education Planning and Training Department took place at the college this morning, attended by 118 retired teachers.

The old students paid respects to the teachers with cash and kind and Myanmar traditional mediines. Next, Principal of the college U Me Aung explained the purpose of holding the respects paying ceremony and Principal U Khin Maung Yin (Rtd) and Head of Department Daw Khin Khin Htwe (Rtd) gave speeches.

**Vietnamese delegation leaves for home**

YANGON, 21 May — The Vietnamese delegation led by Chief of VOV’s Bureau in Central Vietnam Mr Tran Son Ngoe of the Voice of Vietnam (VOV) and party left here by air this morning. The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials of the department. — MNA

YANGON, 21 May — Director-General U Myint Thein Swe of Department of Cultural Institute under the Ministry of Culture left here by air yesterday for Paro in the Kingdom of Bhutan to attend the 1st Culture Ministers’ Meeting and the Senior Officers’ Meeting of BIMSTEC to be held in Bhutan from 22 to 25 May.

He was seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials of the department. — MNA

**Executives of Aungmyethazan Township Maternal and Child Welfare Association present cash assistance to an older person in Dawnabwa Ward on 31 March.**

**D-G of Department of Cultural Institute leaves for Bhutan**

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Chavez reportedly wants to visit Russia

MOSCOW, 20 May — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez wants to visit Russia this summer, Interfax news agency quoted Venezuela’s ambassador to Moscow as saying on Friday.

The trip would bring together two major oil producers who share strained relations with Washington and a growing trade in arms that has annoyed US officials.

President Chavez has approached the Russian leadership with a request to visit Moscow at the end of August or the start of September, Interfax quoted Ambassador Alexis Rafael Navarro Rojas as saying.

“At the moment we are waiting for an answer from the Russians,” he said. He added negotiations were due to start soon on ordering Russian Sukhoi fighter jets.

A spokesman for Russia’s Foreign Ministry said he had no information about a request from Chavez to visit. The ambassador was not immediately available for comment.

China, S Korea sign agreement on culture, copyright cooperation

SHENZHEN, 20 May — China and the Republic of South Korea on Thursday signed an agreement to enhance the exchanges and cooperation on culture and copyright issues.

The agreement was signed between National Copyright Administration of China and South Korea Culture and Tourism Ministry on the sidelines of a four-day international cultural expo in Shenzhen, a booming city in southern China’s Guangdong Province.

As the two Asian nations share similar cultural and historical background, it is in their interests to step up the exchanges and cooperation on culture and copyright issues, said Chinese and South Korea officials at the signing ceremony.

The agreement signifies the more extensive and in-depth cooperation on culture and copyright issues between the two countries, the officials said.

According to the agreement, the two sides will help each other and seek common benefits within the World Trade Organization and other international institutions.

APR calls for strengthening cooperation to face common challenges

JAKARTA, 20 May — Ministers from Asia and the Pacific countries here on Friday called for strengthening regional cooperation to face common challenges to achieve food and livelihood security and rural development.

Anton Apriantono, Chairman of the 28th Regional Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) for Asia and the Pacific Region, told a joint press conference that the challenges could be countered by addressing issues such as food vulnerability, trans-boundary animal diseases and regional vulnerability towards natural disaster.

Anton, who is also Indonesian Minister of Agriculture, said the delegates issued a ministerial joint statement called “The Jakarta Ministerial Statement on Regional Partnership”.

In the statement, the ministers agreed to strengthen efforts on economic reconstruction in Asia and on food security and poverty alleviation, to reduce vulnerability towards natural disasters and to promote a livelihood approach towards post-natural disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction.

At the Press conference, Assistant Director of FAO for Asia and the Pacific Region Ho Changchua said that the ministers were strongly committed to achieving the target of World Food Summit on the Millennium Development Goals to reduce by a half the undernourished and poor people by 2015.

Report blames human error for Cypriot plane crash

ATHENS, 20 May — Human error led to a Cypriot airliner crashing near Athens last August, killing all 121 people aboard, according to an official report leaked to the Greek media on Friday.

The report indicates technicians in Cyprus, checking the decompression system following problems on an earlier flight, forgot to switch on its automatic activation.

Once airborne, pilots forgot to check whether the system was switched on automatic or manual, according to the draft report by the Greek accidents investigation committee.

As a consequence, the higher the plane flew the less oxygen was in the cabin, causing everyone aboard, except for a steward, to fall unconscious.

The report said even if the steward, using portable oxygen bottles, had managed to land the plane all the passengers would have been dead because of lack of oxygen.

There was no comment from Cypriot authorities on the report. The committee was investigating why the Helios Airways Boeing 737-300 had crashed on a flight from Cyprus to Prague. The committee delivered the dossier to Cypriot authorities on Thursday.

The Cypriots have 60 days to include their own findings before a final report is published.

Turkish trucks crash, 39 killed

ISTANBUL, 20 May — Thirty-nine people died when a truck carrying Afghan citizens and another truck crashed on a highway in Turkey on Friday, NTV television reported.

The accident, which also left six injured, was on a motorway running from Osmaniye to Gaziantep, in southeastern Turkey, the broadcaster said on its website, quoting Osmaniye Governor Zubeyir Kemelek.

Kemelek said smuggled Afghan and Bangladeshi immigrants may have been in one of the trucks.

Turkey is a major transit route into Europe for illegal immigrants.

The Turkey Drivers and Motorists Federation said in February that 134,343 people had died and 2.2 million people injured in traffic accidents in Turkey in the last 26 years.

In 2004, 3,082 people were killed in 494,851 accidents, but in 2005, the number of deaths went up to 3,215 people in 570,419 accidents.

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Replicas of caravels which Cristobal Colon (Christopher Columbus) used in his discovery of America are berthed in La Rabida on 20 May, 2006, during the 500th anniversary of the death of Colon in Palos de la Frontera. — INTERNET

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An Iraqi boy throws a rock at a British armoured vehicle at the scene of a roadside bomb attack which destroyed a British vehicle in Basra, 550 km, (341 miles) south of Baghdad on 20 May, 2006. Two British soldiers were injured and their military vehicle was destroyed after a bombing attack in Basra, according to the Iraqi police. — INTERNET

New Zealand mountaineer Mark Inglis, who lost both his legs in a climbing accident 24 years ago, takes a rest on his way to becoming the first double amputee to reach the summit of Everest recently. — INTERNET

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Russia wants changes to US uranium pact

MOSCOW, 20 May — Russia wants major changes to agreements with the United States to boost sales of its nuclear materials, a source in the Russian nuclear industry said on Friday.

Russian officials want changes to agreements that give US uranium supplier USEC the right to buy uranium recovered from dismantled nuclear weapons and to end US anti-dumping duties on other uranium sales, the source said.

The source, who has knowledge of Russian discussions about nuclear sales, told Reuters Russia would like to sell some fuel directly to US customers, without having to go through USEC.

“Russia wants to be there on the American market but it doesn’t have any trouble in finding alternative markets,” the source said. “Russia wants serious changes and, believe me, we are very serious about all of this.”

Sergei Kiriyenko, the head of Russia’s Atomic Energy Agency, began a visit to the United States on Friday. He will hold talks with US companies and senior officials, his spokesman said. He declined to comment on the nuclear agreements.

A spokeswoman for USEC, based in Bethesda, Maryland, could not be immediately reached for comment.

Relations between Moscow and Washington are now close to the coolest they have been since the collapse of the Soviet Union, with differences over how to deal with Iran, the war in Iraq and views on Russian domestic policy.— MNA/Reuters

“Chanchu” kills 23 in China

BEIJING, 20 May — A typhoon that battered south and east China killed 23 people and left four missing, state media said on Friday.

Typhoon Chanchu, the strongest typhoon on record to enter the South China Sea in May, the start of the typhoon season, left a trail of destruction through several countries, killing at least 37 people in the Philippines last weekend.

The typhoon, which brought heavy rain and winds up to 170 kilometres per hour (106 miles per hour), made landfall between the Chinese cities of Shantou and Xiamen and worked its way up the coast early on Thursday.

Eight people died in Guangdong Province and 15 in Fujian, which lies opposite Taiwan, the official Xinhua news agency said.

The storm triggered house collapses and landslides in Shantou in Guangdong.

In Fujian, most of the dead were killed in landslides, including at least four children, Xinhua said.— MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Vice-Premier calls for continued efforts in bird flu prevention

BEIJING, 20 May — China should not relax its efforts in bird flu prevention and control, Chinese Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu warned this week.

No poultry bird flu outbreaks have been reported in China for more than 80 consecutive days, said Hui, who also heads the nation’s bird flu prevention and control team, at a national meeting.

However, he called for continued vigilance against the fatal avian influenza.

“The situation is still grave,” he said, urging related departments to “overcome numbness, have a correct judgement for the current epidemic situation and take the fight against the disease as a long-term task”.

An outbreak among migratory birds was reported in northwestern Qinghai Province earlier this month. More than 300 birds died in the outbreak, but the epidemic did not spread to poultry, the Ministry of Agriculture said on Friday. China also reported 18 human infections of bird flu, with 12 fatalities since last late year.— MNA/Xinhua

Expert says China, land of opportunity for Canadian companies

OTTAWA, 20 May — Head of Canada’s largest trade and industry organization on Thursday urged the country’s business community to lose no time in entering the lucrative Chinese market.

Perin Beatty, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) said many Canadian businesses see the rising China as a huge challenge — the land of outsourced Canadian production, but with a population of over 1.3 billion, the Asian giant represents a potentially colossal market for Canadian companies.

“It all depends on whether you consider the glass is half-full or half-empty.”

He was speaking to about 200 parliamentarians and business representatives at a breakfast briefing on the Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

“CME believes it is half-full, and with some imagination and hard work on our part, we can fill it the rest of the way,” Beatty said.

MNA/Xinhua

India, Poland sign trade accord

WARSAW, 20 May — India and Poland have signed an accord on trade and economic cooperation, the Polish news agency PAP reported on Friday.

The accord with India proved Poland’s growing importance in the European Union and the world, PAP cited the Polish Economy Minister Piotr Wozniak as saying.

India’s visiting Industry Minister Kamal Nath said that India’s trade with Poland, which amounted to merely 600 million US dollars annually, could be better.

“We should be speaking about billions,” he said.

According to Nath, Indian investors were mainly interested in Poland’s industry branches such as IT, coking coal and electronics.

He added that India was hoping to import infra-structure projects from Poland.

Trade with India currently accounts for 0.25 per cent of Poland’s foreign trade.

MNA/Xinhua

Some 18,000 women clad in coloured robes form a Portuguese flag on 20 May, 2006 at the National Stadium in Oeiras, outside Lisbon, in a show of support for Portugal’s national soccer team that will be participating in the World Cup in Germany. The organizers hope what they called ‘The World’s Most Beautiful Flag’ will make it into the Guinness Book as a new world record for the largest human flag.—INTERNET

Painters compete during a facsimile match in Dafen Village, Shenzhen City, south China’s Guangdong Province, on Thursday, 18 May, 2006. More than 110 contestants make facsimile of portrait or scenery oil painting in the timed game held in the village which is famous for painting facsimile industry.—INTERNET

White smoke is seen from an exploded oil tank at a Toa Oil refinery in Kawasaki, south of Tokyo, on 21 May, 2006, but just over two hours later the fire was nearly out, police and fire officials said. There were no injuries.—INTERNET
**FAO calls world to prioritize funds for preventing bird flu**

JAKARTA, 20 May— The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) asked the international community to put top priority on allocating funds for the efforts to stop the spread of avian influenza, top official said here on Thursday.

“Some nine billion US dollars was pledged by the world to fight avian Influenza, but most of this money is on the prevention measures in case of pandemic. This is at the level of human beings instead of giving priority to the current disease itself. It is the disease of animals,” said FAO Director General Jack Diouf at the FAO’s 28th Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific Region.

“We agree with the precautionary measures that make sense, but we also think that the strategy should focus on stopping avian influenza at the level of poultry and birds, if the pandemic actions are the second line of defence,” he said.

“We have therefore been able to collect some funds. It is still marginal compared to money that is being put into fighting the possible pandemic at the level of human being,” the director said.

The disease that earlier only contracted livestock in three countries in Southeast Asia, namely Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia, now had spread to nearly all over the world, he said.

“If we are able to eliminate, at least limit the number of birds that are infected, then we will limit the risk of transmission to human being and other consequences. They have got to mutate for direct transmission from human being to human being,” he said.

To pave the way for reaching the goal, the director stressed the need for international cooperation and an immediate respond to the danger of the virus. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Beijing Capital Museum opens with call for better exhibition spaces**

BEIJING, 20 May— The Capital Museum of Beijing, housing more than 200,000 antiques, was formally opened to public on Thursday with a call for more better museums in China.

More than 300,000 people have passed through its doors since its trial operation five months ago, with the highest daily attendance reaching 7,000, said curator Guo Xiaoling at the opening on International Museum Day.

The ongoing exhibition of the British Museum's “Treasures of the World's Cultures”, the first large international exhibition at the museum, attracted more than 80,000 visitors in its first month.

The cultural relics housed in the museum recorded the 900,000-year human history of Beijing, the city's 3,000-year history and its eight centuries as the capital of China, said Guo.

“There is no other place like the Capital Museum of Beijing where people can see how life was in ancient times in Beijing,” Guo said.

Beijing has entered a new period of extensive construction of museums, according to a report by the municipal bureau of cultural relics. The city has 131 registered museums, topping the country in terms of quantity and quality.

Zheng Bai, deputy director of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH), said the number of museums in China had reached 2,300, or one museum for every 600,000 people. — MNA/Xinhua

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**Villagers walk to their field to work as Mount Merapi, background, is seen spewing volcanic smoke in Subeban village near the town of Boyolali, Indonesia, on 21 May, 2006. — MNA/Xinhua**

**Fire destroys nearly 33.3 hectares of forest in Hainan**

HAIKOU, 20 May— A forest fire broke out in China's island province of Hainan Thursday morning, destroying nearly 33.3 hectares of forest west of the Haikou-Sanya expressway.

The fire was first found in the woods of Duanshi Village, Longgun Town of Wanning City, about 109 kilometres south of Haikou and to the west of the expressway, which runs along the island's eastern coast linking the two major cities of Haikou and Sanya.

Flames rising seven to eight metres could be seen from far away and have spread to less than 10 metres from the expressway.

The blaze has destroyed about 33.3 hectares of woods, according to an official at the scene. “The fire is expanding and has not been controlled,” he said.

A large number of local villagers, government workers, policemen and fire fighters were rushing to the site. A local villager said the fire might have been caused by some people who were lumbering in the forest in the morning.

**Signs of feeding prehistoric birds found in Alaska**

ANCHORAGE (Alaska), 20 May— Scientists found fossilized depressions and footprints in Alaska’s Denali National Park and Preserve in what is believed to be the first evidence of prehistoric wading birds probing for food, a geologist said on Friday.

The tracks and the feeding marks found in rocks formed from freshwater sediments were 65 million to 70 million years old, said Phil Brease, a geologist at Denali National Park.

Such evidence of prehistoric birds’ feeding behaviour is difficult to find because the marks made in the mud disappear easily and the fossilized evidence often erodes, Brease said.

Geologists discovered the tracks and marks last summer, but confirmed the work over the winter after studying photographs and molds.

Denali National Park is an emerging hotbed of fossil findings. A team of geologists also discovered a fossilized footprint of a three-toed, meat-eating dinosaur known as a theropod.— MNA/Reuters

**Venezuelan Govt ready to sell “F-16s”**

CARACAS, 20 May—The Venezuelan Government was willing to sell its F-16 aircraft bought from the United States “to anybody”, Vice-President Jose Vicente Rangel said on Friday.

Rangel said Caracas could do whatever it wanted with the aircraft, but had no intention to break off ties with the United States.

“It is the United States who does not have the right to cut off the supply,” he said.

The fighter planes were bought from the United States in the 1980s under a memorandum of understanding, which said the US authorities would supply spare parts and offer technical help. In the same document, Venezuela promised not to sell the technology or the planes to a third party.

Rangel slammed the delay in the American supply of spare parts for the F-16s, which had prevented Venezuelan Armed Forces from using the aircraft.— MNA/Xinhua
Hu orders proper transfer of miliary officers to civilian work

BEIJING, 20 May — Hu Jintao, the Chinese President and General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, says the proper transfer of military officers to civilian work will have an impact on the country’s reform and development.

“CPC committees and governments at all levels should improve placement policies and explore new approaches in compliance with national and military conditions,” said Hu, who is also Chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Hu also asked military officers facing career transitions to understand the difficulties of regional authorities in allocating them jobs. He asked them to accept and respect the jobs they are provided.

Hui’s instructions were conveyed to a national video and telephone conference held in Beijing on Thursday to discuss placement of military officers in civilian posts.

Li Jinai, a member of the Central Military Commission and director of the General Political Department of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, cited 2006 as a crucial year for the transfer of military officers to civilian work.

China made a decision in 2003 to reserve its troops by 200,000 to 2.3 million.

Quake hits off Indonesian island of Sulawesi

WASHINGTON, 20 May — An earthquake registering 6.1 hit in the Molucca Sea near Indonesia but officials expected no major repercussions, an official at the Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre said on Friday.

The quake struck at 10:44 pm Saturday local time (10:44 am EDT/1444 GMT) but was not strong enough to require a tsunami warning, said Dailin Wang of the warning centre in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. Wang said the epicenter of the quake was about 125 miles (200 kilometres) off the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. — MNA/Reuters

Musharraf rejects using Afghanistan as strategic depth

ISLAMABAD, 20 May — Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf has rejected the old notion of using Afghanistan as strategic depth in case of any aggression, a local TV channel reported on Friday.

Rejecting using Afghanistan as strategic depth, Musharraf said that the theory is based on assumptions that a country has been invaded and overrun and the government is operating from other countries.

“This can never happen to Pakistan,” Musharraf told the TV Khyber in an interview aired on Friday, adding that according to Pakistan’s military strategy its defences lie in the borders.

We will never let our enemies enter our areas,” the Pakistani President said.

No one knew where Osama bin Laden was and those who say he was in Pakistan, should come up with information and intelligence, Musharraf said. Saying that Osama could be anywhere in the world, the Pakistani President, however, presumed that he might be hiding in the border region between Pakistan and Afghanistan.

WHO confirms two bird flu cases in Indonesia

JAKARTA, 20 May — The World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed one more human fatality and one more human infection of bird flu for Indonesia, local officials said here on Friday. A 12-year-old boy who died in Jakarta on May 13 and a 10-year-old boy in North Sumatra, still alive, were the new victims of the disease, said Health Ministry spokeswoman Lily S. Sulistiyawati.

The country’s total number of fatality of bird flu now stood at 32 and that of infection at 43, she added.

All over the world, the WHO has raised the confirmed human death toll from the H5N1 bird flu strain to 122, while the total number of confirmed human infections since the current outbreak began in 2003 has reached 216. — MNA/Xinhua

NPL of Philippine banks drops to lowest level in 8 years

MANILA, 20 May — The universal and commercial banks’ non-performing loans (NPL) dropped nearly one billion US dollars from last year to a ratio of 8.26 per cent in March, the lowest level in eight years, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), the Philippine Central Bank, said Friday.

The end-March 2006 ratio was lower than 11.3 per cent last year. As of March, the banks’ non-performing loans stood at 157.8 billion pesos (three billion US dollars), lower than 207.1 billion (four billion US dollars) last year, the BSP said in an updated report.

The remarkable drop was due to the banks’ write-off of problematic loans and aggressive collection and settlement of past due with borrowers, the report said. The ratio was the industry’s lowest since 1998, the central bank added. The Philippine banks’ total loan portfolio stood at 1.9 trillion pesos (36.5 billion dollars), it said. — MNA/Xinhua

Fire sparks explosions at Sudan arms dump

JUBA (Sudan), 20 May — A fire at a munitions dump sparked a wave of explosions and injured at least four people outside the southern Sudanese capital of Juba on Friday, witnesses and UN staff said.

The fire, whose cause was unknown, caused intermittent explosions for about 90 minutes from 4 pm (1300 GMT) and sent a plume of smoke into the air on the edge of Juba, where the government of southern Sudan is based. — MNA/Reuters

Chinese rescuers (R) offer food to Vietnamese fishermen who were saved in the South China Sea on 20 May, 2006. A total of 330 Vietnamese fishermen caught in typhoon Chanchu have been saved by Chinese rescuers, said China Maritime Search and Rescue Centre on Sunday, Xinhua News Agency reported. — INTERNET
Biodiversity: Our Life, Our Future

Yin Yin Lay

Loss of biodiversity is one of the serious environmental issues the world is facing today. Yet, apart from scientific community and environmental circles, few people actually understand the seriousness of the problem or grasp its impact on our life and future. With the aim to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues, the United Nations has designated 22 May as the International Biodiversity Day. Many nations across the globe mark the day with special events to draw public attention on these critical issues.

Scientists began using the term biological diversity (or “biodiversity”) in the 1980s. This term gained prominence in 1992, when the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity was adopted at the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Simply defined, biodiversity means various forms of plants, animals, insects and microbes. There are three types of biodiversity:

- Genetic diversity is the variety of genetic version of a single species
- Species diversity is the variety of organism within a community or ecosystem; and
- Ecological diversity is the variety of ecosystem on Earth.

Despite surveys and research, it is not yet exactly known how many species are currently on this planet. Science has recorded and named some 1.7 million species but this can only be some small fraction of the true number. Estimates range from some 3.6 million to over 100 million species.

Biodiversity brings enormous benefits to mankind. Trees, plants, animals and other species provide basic supplies of food, medicines, timber, fibers, fuel and many other products. Roughly, one-third of all plant species have edible fruits, tubers, nuts, seeds, leaves, roots or stems. Less than a dozen crops now feed most of the world’s population of over 6 billion. Three cereals namely, maize, rice and wheat alone supply 80 to 90 per cent of world calorie intake. Maize is important food security for Africa, while rice is the principle food source for half of the world’s population mainly living in Asia. Demand for wheat is growing worldwide and the consumption has doubled in the last thirty years.

Many people rely on plants for health and an longevity. The World Health Organization estimates that 3.5 billion people in the developing countries rely on plant-based medicine for their primary health care. Ayurvedic and other traditional healers in South Asia use at least 1,800 different plant species in treatments. In China, healers employ more than 5,000 plant species. One-quarter of the medicines marketed in North America and Europe contain active ingredients derived from plants. FAO estimates that between 4,000 to 6,000 species of medicinal plants are traded internationally. Biodiversity has economic and commercial importance. A large percentage of the rural population in the developing countries depend on locally available biodiversity for their livelihood. The economy of most of the developing countries also depends to a large extent on the production and export of crops, livestock, fisheries and forest products.

Biodiversity also performs important ecological function. For example, trees release oxygen, purify air, stabilize climate and prevent soil erosion. Moreover, biodiversity has spiritual, ethical and aesthetic values. Natural world and its aesthetic richness such as the song of birds, the hum of bees and insects, exotic flowers, green woods and dense forests enrich human minds and thoughts and instill aspirations and happiness. It is really a pity that nowadays, people especially in the urban centres are being confined to the steel, concrete and plastic world.

Notwithstanding its enormous value and significance, the Earth’s biodiversity is declining at an alarming rate mainly as a result of human actions. It has been estimated that 27,000 species are lost every year. Aerial and satellite photos have revealed that tropical rain forests which harbor most of the terrestrial species of our planet are disappearing at a rate of 12 million hectares a year. Species extinction is expected to rise to between 1,000 and 10,000 times the natural rate.

Overexploitation, overharvesting, illegal hunting and trade, illegal logging and loss of habitats are some of the main causes of biodiversity loss. Land use changes such as agricultural expansion, mining and urban development also result in degradation and loss of habitats. Depletion of wetlands is also an important cause of a decline in fresh water fish and waterfowls. Marine life is also being threatened due to overexploitation and pollution.

Turning to the bright side, there are positive developments as regards biodiversity conservation. Recognising the need to address the dwindling world biological resources, international conventions such as Convention on Biodiversity and Biosafety Protocol; Convention on Migratory species; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance have been adopted and are being implemented. Since the last two or three decades, a host of biodiversity conservation projects and activities have been undertaken by international and local environmental NGOs. There are also many individuals who are committed to protect and conserve biodiversity.

Myanmar has rich biological resources. Although biodiversity inventory has not yet completed in Myanmar, it has been officially stated that there are 350 mammal species, 300 reptile species, 1,000 bird species and 9,600 plant species.

Biodiversity conservation has been a tradition, long practised in Myanmar. The wildlife sanctuary at the environ of Mandalay City was decreed by King Mindon in 1859. Conservation of nature and biodiversity is an ingrained habits of most people in Myanmar to conserve biodiversity, the Government enacted the Protection of Wildlife, Wild plants and Conservation of Natural Area Law in 1994. A target has been set to increase protected area up to 5 per cent in the short term and 10 per cent in the long term.

There are now 40 protected areas in Myanmar including wildlife and bird sanctuaries, national parks and nature reserves. Myanmar is also a party to the Convention on Biodiversity; Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora; and Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance.

This year’s theme for the International Biodiversity Day is “Protect Biodiversity in Drylands”. Drylands cover more than 40 per cent of the planet’s surface. Over 250 million people living in the drylands are more vulnerable members of society whose livelihood depend greatly on local biodiversity. In order to promote and sustain economic and social wellbeing of the dryland population, it is most crucial to protect biodiversity in those regions. In Myanmar about 10 per cent of land in the country are drylands. Greening project in the Dry Zone undertaken since 1994 is indeed an important measure to protect and conserve biodiversity in the drylands of Myanmar.

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Plan for self-reliant libraries’ durability discussed

Deputy Director Daw Khin San of Shan State (North) IPRD speaks at the meeting for self-reliant library’s durability in Manhe Village of Hsipaw Township.

HISPAY, 10 May — Deputy Director Daw Khin San of Shan State (North) Information and Public Relations Department together with Staff Officer U Maung Ko and officials of Kyaukme District IPRD inspected Pinnya Alin self-reliant library in Manhe Village in Hsipaw Township, and discussed durability of the library with responsible persons recently.

Head of Hsipaw Township IPRD U Sai Tha Hlaing and Secretary of Manhe Village Self-Repliant Library Committee Daw Maw Maw Tun reported on progress of the library. Deputy Director Daw Khin San gave instructions on its perpetual existence.

Physic nut plant growing ceremony held in Twantay

Twantay, 15 May — The physic nut plant growing ceremony organized by Yangon South District Forest Department was held on 12 May at Kyun Daw Reserve Forest in Phayakvi Village, Twantay Township.

Deputy Director U Than Oo of Yangon South District Forest Department, Twantay Township Forest Department Staff Officer U Mya Win Aung and staff planted 30,250 physic nut saplings on 25 acres of land from 5 to 16 May.

Cash assistance provided to retired sisters in Pathein

PATEIN, 12 May — In commemoration of the International Nurses Day, Pathein Nurses Association (Branch) donated cash assistance to retired sisters of Pathein in Ayeawaddy Division on 11 May. Members of the Nurses Association (Branch) presented K5,000 each for 11 retired nurses. Staff Officers Daw Kyin Hmwe and Daw Win Win Myint of Ayeawaddy Division Health Department (Nurse), the Principal and instructors of Nurses and Mid-Wifery Training School of Pathein, Sister Daw Ohn Myint and nurses of Pathein General Hospital gave cash assistance to the retired persons at their homes.
Myanmar Youth set sights on success in Lion Cup, Asian U-17 Championship

Myanmar U-17 Football Team is holding the opportunity to enter the final stage of the Asian U-17 Championship hosted by Singapore in September 2006 by grabbing a win over opponent Thai youth team in the qualifier match.

At present, Myanmar youth team is making preparations keenly for improvement of players’ skills to achieve victory to a certain extent in the Asian level football tournament. When the championship commences, Myanmar will have to struggle for its success in the group comprising Asian powerhouse teams—Saudi Arabia, North Korea and powerhouse teams—Saudi Arabia, North Korea and improving Laos.

As a tune-up competition, Myanmar four. Myanmar Youth Team, being champion in the ASEAN U-17 Championship 2005 is favorite to win success in the Cup. Although it did not play with Malaysia and Singapore in the ASEAN U-17 Championship 2005, Myanmar deservedly clinched the championship trophy by defeating Thai and other rival teams.

Now, a total of 26 tentatively selected players of Myanmar Youth Team is undergoing training to participate in the Asian U-17 Championship. Together with six new players, the team is formed with 20 players who took part in the qualifier of the championship. Out of 26 players, 18 selected players will be picked out for taking Myanmar Youth Team has been undergoing training. As part of preparations for the Asian U-17 Championship, Myanmar youth will enter the Lion Cup in Singapore. At present, the Myanmar Youth Team is in the best position. The team is formed with 20 players who had taken part in the qualifier of the championship, together with three players each from Sports and Physical Education Institutes (Yangon) and (Mandalay). Two injured players Goalkeeper Nay Hlaing and Naing Lin Tun will miss the Lion Cup. Prior to the Lion Cup, the Myanmar Youth Team will have to struggle for its success in the group comprising Asian powerhouse teams—Saudi Arabia, North Korea and improving Laos.

A Myanmar Coach training Myanmar U-17 players.

A player of Myanmar U-17 seen in training session.

A Myanmar Coach training Myanmar U-17 Team.

Construction Team on 22 May. Despite suffering injury in the tune-up matches, Pyae Phyo Oo, Zin Myo Aung and Than Tun Aung would recover from their injury soon and they will not miss the matches. Now, the Myanmar Youth Team is being nurtured by Chief Coach Mr Minkovski and Myanmar Coaches. In the qualifier of the Asian U-17 Championship held in Thailand from 13 to 17 November 2005, Myanmar whitewashed Maldives 12-0 and played a 1-1 draw with host Thailand. Myanmar was qualified for the championship. A total of 26 tentatively selected players of the Myanmar Youth Team are: Pyae Phyo Oo, Kaung Myat Han, San Lwin Oo, Than Tun Aung, Naing Lin Tun, Moe Naing Tun, Myat Naing Aung, Nyein Nyan Soe, Van La Harwe (Goalkeeper), Aye Moe, Zin Myo Aung, Aung Kyaw Moe, Zaw Lin, Chu Ko Ko Htwe, David Dun, Tin Win Aung, Paing Myo, Aung Myint Tun, Yan Aung Win, Nay Hlaing (Goalkeeper), Pyae Phyo Ko Ko, Chit Ko Ko (2), Soe Paing Thu (Goalkeeper), Aung Zaw Lin, Aung Pyone Kyawing and Kaung Myat Tun.

To be able to bring the honour to the State, Myanmar Under-17 Team — holder of the ASEAN Under-17 Championship 2005 and the qualifier of the Asian Under-17 Championship 2006—is striving with concerted efforts to take part in the Myanmar Youth Team and Lion Cup of Singapore.

Translation: TTA
Growing number of Chinese prefer electronic reading

WASHINGTON, 21 May — Government testing found the cancer-causing chemical benzene in some soft drinks but not at high enough levels to cause harm, US regulators said on Friday.

Five out of more than 100 beverages tested had benzene in amounts exceeding the limit set for US drinking water — 5 parts per billion, the Food and Drug Administration said.

The agency said it asked manufacturers to minimize or eliminate benzene levels in their products. All of the makers contacted have re-formulated the drinks or are in the process of doing so, FDA officials said.

The agency tested samples of soft drinks and other beverages from November 2005 through April 2006.

The benzene amounts detected “do not pose a safety concern for consumers”, the FDA said in a statement. Most products had very low levels of benzene or none that was detected, said Dr Laura Tarantini, director of the FDA’s Office of Food Additive Safety.

Some levels were as high as 88 parts per billion, according to data posted on the FDA website. There is no limit set for soft drinks but regulators believe benzene levels should be minimal, Tarantini said.

“Any benzene in soft drinks that can be avoided by the way you formulate or package or distribute should be avoided. That’s what we’re really asking,” she said.

A representative for Swiss jeweller Chopard displays the Palme d’Or film award as preparations continue on the eve of the start of the 59th International Film Festival in Cannes, on May 16, 2006. The festival opens on 17 May and runs until 28 May. INTERNET

A male baboon yawns in the Cape Peninsula outside Cape Town, South Africa in this 9 May, 2006 file photo. Unruly gangs of baboons raid the upmarket homes that line the spectacular coast of South Africa’s Cape Peninsula, clearing out pantries, emptying fridges, and defecating over the designer finishes. It’s baboon versus human in a string of wealthy ocean-front communities 30 minutes from the trendy centre of Cape Town, a top tourist destination. Picture taken on 9 May, 2006. INTERNET

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A male baboon yawns in the Cape Peninsula outside Cape Town, South Africa in this 9 May, 2006 file photo. Unruly gangs of baboons raid the upmarket homes that line the spectacular coast of South Africa’s Cape Peninsula, clearing out pantries, emptying fridges, and defecating over the designer finishes. It’s baboon versus human in a string of wealthy ocean-front communities 30 minutes from the trendy centre of Cape Town, a top tourist destination. Picture taken on 9 May, 2006. INTERNET

Former rightist Czech official attacks Minister

PRAGUE, 21 May — A former rightist deputy prime minister attacked leftist Health Minister David Rath at a meeting on Saturday, state television showed, raising political tensions in the Czech Republic two weeks before an election.

Miroslav Macek, a former deputy prime minister in the 1990s and a long-time adviser to President Vaclav Klaus, was chairing a meeting of Czech dentists when videotape aired on state television showed he walked over to a seated Rath and hit him in the back of the head.

A male baboon yawns in the Cape Peninsula outside Cape Town, South Africa in this 9 May, 2006 file photo. Unruly gangs of baboons raid the upmarket homes that line the spectacular coast of South Africa’s Cape Peninsula, clearing out pantries, emptying fridges, and defecating over the designer finishes. It’s baboon versus human in a string of wealthy ocean-front communities 30 minutes from the trendy centre of Cape Town, a top tourist destination. Picture taken on 9 May, 2006. INTERNET

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Teenager held over London schoolboy’s death

LONDON, 21 May — Police arrested a teenager on Saturday in their investigation into the stabbing to death this week of a 15-year-old boy outside his London school.

Kiyan Prince was fatally wounded outside the London Academy in Edgware, northwest London, before being taken to a hospital but died from his wounds. British media said the boy was stabbed after stinging in to break up a fight.

Scotland Yard said on Saturday they had arrested a 16-year-old boy in connection with their inquiry. Prince was a youth team player at the London Championship soccer club Queens Park Rangers (QPR).

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Indonesia pressing for Australian support on Papua

MEDFORD, (Massachusetts), 21 May — Australia's leader should sign a document recognizing Jakarta's rule over West Papua Province to resolve a dispute over Canberra's decision to grant 42 Papuans asylum, a senior Indonesian official said on Saturday.

Leaders of Australia and Indonesia, facing their most serious disruption of relations since over East Timor independence in 1999, plan to meet soon to discuss the dispute, which caused Jakarta to recall its ambassador.

Indonesia says Australia's decision to grant refugee status to the Papuans in March gave support to Papua's independence movement.

But differences over the issue were narrowing between Jakarta and Canberra, said Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda.

Flood forces evacuation of community in eastern Canada

OTTAWA, 21 May — Ten straight days of rain have forced a community east of Montreal, Canada's second largest city, to evacuate about 30 homes because of flooding.

The banks of the Yamaska River began overflowing early Saturday morning, forcing about 100 people from their homes, reports reaching here said.

Officials warned that more homes could be evacuated if the situation worsens, and are asking residents to clear out their basements as a precautionary measure.

The Red Cross set up an emergency shelter for the evacuees, and several pumps are working to keep the flooding from spreading.

Floods were also reported in several other regions of Quebec Province. According to Environment Canada, around 140 millimetres of rain has fallen this month in southwestern Quebec. The agency says the 10 consecutive days of rain parts of the province have seen is unusual.

China begins comprehensive check of pharmaceutical plants

BEIJING, 21 May — China has launched a comprehensive check of pharmaceutical plants nationwide after a fake drug caused the death of five people.

"Drug administrations should immediately launch comprehensive checks of raw materials purchased, management of materials and examination of finished products of pharmaceutical plants," says a circular issued by the State Food and Drug Administration.

Five people died and six people were hospitalized after they were injected with the fake drug Armillarisini A injection made by the Qiqihar No 2 Pharmaceutical Co Ltd in northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

The government has shut down the plant and banned the sale of all medicines made by it.

"We must further improve supervision and administration of drug production to ensure the safety of drugs and prevent such accidents from happening again," said an official with the administration.

According to a government investigation, the company purchased one ton of "propylene glycol" from drug dealer Wang Guiping in September 2005 as auxiliary material for producing the Armillarisini A Injection.

The "propylene glycol" delivered by Wang is actually diglycol, an industrial material which causes acute kidney failure if taken by humans.

The company's quality inspectors failed to discover the problem.

Using diglycol, the company produced the injection, mainly for treating acute or chronic cholecystitis and chronic and atrophic gastritis.

Drug authorities in South China's Guangdong Province reported on 3 May that patients using the injection had developed acute kidney failure symptoms, which prompted immediate investigation into the case.

The police have detained the suspect Wang Guiping and have taken other people involved in the case into custody.

Further investigations revealed the Qiqihar No 2 Pharmaceutical Co Ltd had been producing four other fake drugs before its closure.

Two killed in Gaza’s Palestinian security HQs blast

GAZA, 21 May — Two people were killed and 10 others including Palestinian intelligence chief were injured in a blast that rocked the Palestinian security headquarters in the Gaza Strip on Saturday, security sources said.

Palestinian intelligence chief Tareq Abu Rajab and his bodyguards were in the area when the explosion went off in the building's elevator, said the sources. One of Abu Rajab's bodyguards was killed in the blast and the other was not immediately recognized.

Abu Rajab, along with other injured, was rushed to Gaza City hospital where he was undergoing a surgery, said the sources.

The blast was caused by a bomb planted in the building's elevator bank, said the sources, adding that the bomb went off in the elevator close to the second floor as he and his bodyguards were heading to his office on the fourth floor of the building.

It is the third time that he escapes assassination attempt. Saturday's blast against the security headquarters in Gaza came amid mounting tension between ruling Hamas and supporters of the previously dominant Fatah movement after armed clashes had left several militants dead.

Abu Rajab heads the general intelligence forces, which is under Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' command.

The intelligence chief headed an investigation team to Jordan in mid-May to probe an alleged weapon smuggling issued by Hamas activists.

28 climbers scale Mt Everest on Saturday

KATHMANDU, 21 May — A total of 28 mountaineers of four different expeditions have scaled Mt Qomolangma, the world's tallest peak, on Saturday.

According to Radio Nepal, a 12-member team of India climbed Mt Everest Saturday from South. The team comprised of six Indians and six Nepali high altitude workers.

The six Indians who scaled the peak were all government employees.

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China's Trade Union calls for minimum wage boost

BEIJING, 20 May— The All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) has called on provincial governments to raise their legal minimum wage amid concerns the real value of the minimum wage is slipping.

A statement from the ACFTU said some governments had yet to set per-hour minimum wage standards, some had failed to include unemployment insurance, welfare and medical insurance, and public housing funds when setting minimum wage standards.

Employers in some areas are by-passing local minimum wage standards by implementing a piecework wage system.

The Chinese Government established a minimum wage system in 1993, which the country's 31 provincial, autonomous regions and municipal authorities were responsible for implementing.

Minimum wage levels in some areas were considered too low to ensure low-income groups and an inadequate minimum wage would enlarge the income gap.

The Chinese Government has already raised its minimum wage levels to the levels of local average incomes to 40 to 60 per cent of the country's 31 provincial, autonomous regions and municipal authorities.

Ministers in Beijing's 2004 Speech that the Singapore Government has adopted a three-pronged approach to collaborate with the private sector in helping SMEs access financing. The second approach is that the government has been catalyzing new financing options, Chan said, citing the Loan Insurance Scheme (LIS) and the SME Access Loan as examples. The third approach is that the government has been providing loans of up to 10,000 businesses, which have less than 10 employees each, in the past five years with some 326 million Singapore dollars (about two billion US dollars).
China offers subsidies for retiring outdated motor vehicles

BEIJING, 20 May — China will offer up to 15,000 yuan (1,875 US dollars) for each motor vehicle which is retired before the date required by law, China’s Ministry of Finance said on Friday.

The retired motor vehicle eligible for subsidies include large cargo and passenger vehicles registered during 1997 and 1999 and those with over 30 seats and nine metres in length. The ministry said the subsidies for retiring and replacing an outdated bus with a new bus that meet EURO II exhaust gas emission standards will be 15,000 yuan.

The move is designed to promote the development of the country's auto sector, reduce air pollution and traffic accidents, and save energy. — MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Vice-Premier wants improved meteorological innovation

BEIJING, 20 May — Chinese Vice-Premier Hui Liangyu underscored here Thursday that China needs to build a world class modern meteorological system.

Hui said China’s meteorological services have played an important role in the country’s disaster relief, economic construction, social development and national defence.

Yet the Vice-Premier said that current meteorological technology and services do not entirely meet the need of the fast growing society. He urged all related departments to implement the central government’s policies on meteorological development and provide sufficient support to the innovation. — MNA/Xinhua

Mittal Steel launches Arcelor takeover bid

BRUSSELS, 20 May — Mittal Steel has officially launched its bid for rival Arcelor after the go-ahead from European regulators, local media reported on Thursday.

France, Belgium and Luxembourg regulators have already given approval for Mittal’s 21-billion-euro hostile takeover bid for steel firm Arcelor, according to Brussels-based news website expatica.

US regulators have also cleared the deal on antitrust grounds, but Mittal is still waiting for EU-level regulatory approval. The European Union (EU) is set to approve the deal by June 7. Mittal, the world’s largest steel group by volume, is offering a mix of cash and equity during its Arcelor offer period extending until June 29. However, the Luxembourg-based Arcelor has repeatedly voiced its opposition to the bid.

Arcelor has urged shareholders to preserve its independence and has already promised an increased 2005 dividend and 5.8 billion euros (around 6.4 billion US dollars) share buyback above market level to convince them. — MNA/Xinhua

Villagers row a newly-built dragon boat at a river in the suburbs of Guangzhou, capital of China’s southern Guangdong Province on 20 May, 2006.

The boats are prepared for the Dragon Boat Festival which is celebrated with boat races to represent the attempted rescue of poet Chu Yuan. Chu Yuan drowned on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month in 277 BC. This year’s Dragon Boat Festival falls on 31 May. — INTERNET

Solar energy production base established in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 21 May — A Chinese company plans to invest two billion yuan (250 million US dollars) to set up a solar energy production base in Shanghai in the coming five years, one of the largest of its kind in the country.

The Jinhong Industrial Group, a leading solar energy company based in Hebei Province, will be engaged in manufacturing photovoltaic cell, crystal silicon and other key products in Fengxian County of Shanghai. — MNA/Xinhua

Greenpeace briefly shuts Cargill in Brazil terminal

SAO PAULO (Brazil), 20 May — Environmental activist group Greenpeace said on Friday it temporarily shut down a Cargill Inc export terminal in Brazil to protest the US grain trader’s work in the Amazon.

The group said the soy exported from Cargill’s terminal in Santarem was grown on deforested Amazon jungle.

One activist was thrown into the river and eight people were arrested, Greenpeace said. Climbers tried to occupy the roof and conveyor belts of Cargill’s facility, where they display a banner reading ‘Fora Cargill’ — ‘Cargill get out’, Greenpeace said in a statement.

Greenpeace said other volunteers were trying to prevent soybeans from being unloaded from barges.

The organization’s Arctic Sunrise boat was obstructing the dock area but a vessel at the terminal was attempting to remove it.

“American corporations like Cargill are eating up the Amazon to grow soya,” Greenpeace Amazon coordinator Paulo Adario said in the statement. — MNA/Reuters

China netizens oppose auction of Mao Zedong’s portrait

BEIJING, 20 May — Sina.com, a popular Chinese Internet portal, has seen more than 18,000 posts from netizens opposing the auction of late Chairman Mao Zedong’s portrait.

After the website published the news that Huachen Auction Company will begin the bidding for Mao’s portrait on 3 June, thousands went online expressing hopes that the government authority will end the auction. Saturday’s China Daily reported.

The original model for the Mao painting that hung over high through the 1950s on Beijing’s Tiananmen Rostrum, the symbol of the China’s Communist revolution, is expected to fetch one million to 1.2 million yuan (120,000-150,000 US dollars).

“I strongly oppose the auction of Chairman Mao’s portrait because it is neither a mere piece of artistic work nor a commercial activity. Mao Zedong is the spirit of our great nation,” an anonymous person said on the Internet. “How dare they do such a thing! If they sold Mao’s portrait today, they will sold Tiananmen Rostrum the other day.”

The portrait was painted by Zhang Zhenshi, known as the best portraitist in China specialized in the painting of Mao. He was among more than 30 painters invited from around the country to create a new portrait of Mao to mark the first anniversary of the People’s Republic of China in 1950. — MNA/Xinhua

The new Sony Ericsson Walkman telephone. Ericsson, the world’s biggest supplier of mobile telecommunication systems, is to bid for a contract to setup a 2.1 billion euro (2.7 billion dollar) surveillance system on the US-Mexico border. — INTERNET
**SPORTS**

**Levski secure Bulgarian league title for 24th time**

SOFIA, 21 May — Levski Sofia clinched their 24th Bulgarian league title on Saturday with a 2-1 win at relegation-threatened Botev Plovdiv. With two matches to go, Levski have an unassailable eight-point lead over bitter city rivals CSKA who were beaten 1-0 at lowly Rodopa Smolyan.

CSKA had a seven-point lead at the top after the 21 May 2006 round of speculation about his future by pledging his future to the North London club on Friday.

The 28-year-old, who signed a new four-year contract, had a year left on his former contract and had been linked with a move to Barcelona but has opted to stay and lead Arsenal in their new stadium.

**South Africa end 7-hour goal drought in Swazi win**

JOHANNESBURG, 21 May — South Africa ended a run of almost seven hours without a goal in a 1-0 win over Swaziland in the Cosafa Castle Cup on Saturday. Benson Mthlougo scored with a 13th minute header to ensure a place in the Group B final against Botswana on Sunday.

Botswana won Saturday’s second semifinal with a 2-0 win over Madagascar. Mthlougo’s headed South Africa’s record run of 418 minutes without a goal when he stole in behind Swaziland’s defence.

A locally-based side proved too strong for the Swazis, playing their first match under Belgian coach Jan van Winckel. Two goals in two minutes midway through the second half from substitute Moemedi Mthipathip and defender Khumo Mothibane allowed Botswana to cap a record run of 13 minutes without a goal.

**Henry signs new contract with Arsenal**

LONDON, 21 May — Arsenal talisman Thierry Henry ended months of speculation about his future by pledging his future to the North London club on Friday.

At one point it crossed my mind to leave,” he told a news conference, two days after Arsenal lost the Champions League final to Barca.

“But I think with my heart and my heart told me to stay,” Henry said Arsenal’s performance in the 2-1 defeat to Barcelona had been key to his decision to commit his future to the club.

“We can be so proud of what we did,” he said.

The game reassured me of one thing I wanted to know — how far I can go with that team. They showed me they are a team with heart and lots of quality.”

**Barca lose but Eto'o finishes as top scorer**

MADRID, 21 May — Barcelona striker Samuel Eto’o crowned a memorable season by finishing as the Primera Liga’s top marksman with 26 goals as he scored in his side’s 3-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao on Saturday.

The Cameroon international missed out on the honour last year when Villarreal’s Diego Forlan pipped him at the post on the last day of the season.

Eto’o, who also scored in Wednesday’s 2-1 Champions League final win over Arsenal, started the day level with Valencia’s David Villa on 25 goals.

He netted after 36 minutes to put his weakened side ahead in their rescheduled last game of the season though the Basques scored three times after the break to take the points.

The European and Spanish champions finished their league campaign on 82 points, 12 clear of second-placed Real Madrid. After a season spent fighting against relegation Bilbao climbed to 12th.

The game had a true end of season feel about it with Barca already crowned champions and Bilbao safe from relegation and out of the running for the European places.

The visitors were shorn of first-team regulars such as Ronaldinho, Deco, Carles Puyol and Rafael Marquez.

Part of FIFA’s ruling that allowed the delayed match to take place after the May 15 deadline set for the end of the league season was that international players involved in next month’s World Cup finals were barred from competing.

**Brazilians power CSKA Moscow to Cup victory**

MOSCOW, 21 May — CSKA Moscow kept hold of the Russian Cup on Saturday after their Brazilian strikers Jo and Wagner Love swept them to a 3-0 victory over city rivals Spartak.

Jo opened the scoring two minutes before the end of a fast and furious first half, driving a free kick through the wall and out of reach of Spartak keeper Wojciech Kowalewski.

Spartak, who have not won a game against CSKA since 2001, tried hard to level but never looked dangerous and their misery was compounded when midfielder Santos Mozari was shown a red card for fouling fellow Brazilian Dudu two minutes from time.

Wagner Love made it 2-0 with a solo effort in the 90th minute when he picked the ball up in midfield and fixed the goalkeeper.

Jo, Russian league’s top scorer with 11 goals in nine matches, then finished off Spartak with a clean strike from just outside the box in injury time.

Spartak’s caretaker coach Vladimir Fedotov praised his opponents.

“We simply lost to a better team,” said former CSKA striker Fedotov.

Coach Valery Gazzyev added: “It’s not enough to play well, it was also important to show the team spirit and fight to the end.”

**Safina struggles past Kuznetsova to Rome final**

Rome, 21 May — Dinara Safina emerged victorious from a 2 1/2 hour claycourt battle, beating fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-7, 6-4, 7-5 to reach the final of the Italian Open on Saturday.

She will play Martina Hingis or Venus Williams in the final.

Safina, seeded 16, finally seized control in the 11th game of the final set when seventh seed Kuznetsova netted two forehands and drifted a backhand wide over the baseline to gift her opponent a break and the chance to serve out for the match.

“It was really a long time. In the second set I just played it point by point and in the end it went my way today,” said Safina after

Barca lose but Eto’o finishes as top scorer

**Answers to yesterday’s Crossword Puzzle**

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**Japanese tennis player Eto’o**

Safina maintained her momentum into the deciding title, three times going a break up only to be pegged back on each occasion.

**Barcelona’s Eto’o**

Safina struggled past Kuznetsova, seeded 16, finally seizing control in the 11th game of the final set when seventh seed Kuznetsova netted two forehands and drifted a backhand wide over the baseline to gift her opponent a break and the chance to serve out for the match.

“It was really a long time. In the second set I just played it point by point and in the end it went my way today,” said Safina after
Toronto issues health warning over hepatitis outbreak

OTTAWA, 21 May — Toronto, Canada’s largest city, issued a health warning on Saturday following an outbreak of hepatitis among about 400 dialysis patients at a local hospital.

Toronto Public Health urged the patients not to share toothbrushes or razors with family members and to use condoms.

“There are eight patients we are investigating with new infections,” Dr. Michael Finkelstein, an associate medical officer with Toronto Public Health, told the Globe and Mail newspaper.

It is not clear how dialysis patients who use the facilities run by Scarborough Hospital, located at Toronto’s east end, would have become infected with the Hepatitis B or C that has shown up in recent routine tests. Dr. Gordon Nagai, who works in the Scarborough Regional Dialysis Programme, said that they were searching for the source of the infection. A staff member could be the source and the entire staff is being tested.

However, the infection could be coming from another place.

Every dialysis patient is being tested for both Hepatitis B and C. As a further precaution, they are also testing for HIV during regular dialysis sessions.

Hepatitis B and C are viral diseases of the liver spread through contact with blood or body fluids. The disease can cause permanent liver damage.

MNA/Xinhua

Offices in Nepal busy with changing names

KATHMANDU, 21 May — Government offices and state institutions have been busy since on Friday with changing their signboards, letter pads and stamps and adopting the new name: Government of Nepal, local Press reported on Saturday.

Following a proclamation by the House of Representatives on Thursday, the government told all its ministries, offices and other bodies, including foreign missions, to replace “His Majesty’s Government” with “Government of Nepal” in signboards, letter pads, official seals and officials circulars, The Kathmandu Post reported.

The Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) and Council of Ministers also changed their signboards on Friday told the Army to rename itself “Nepali Army”, the English-language newspaper reported. — MNA/Xinhua

Irish U2 lead singer and anti-poverty campaigner Bono is welcomed by Maasai women as he visits their traditional Shambaasha Village near Arusha on 20 May. — INTERNET

WEATHER

Sunday, 22 May, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, the Southwest monsoon has advanced into Myanmar Deltaic areas. Rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Chin and Mon States, Yangon, Ayeawady and Taninthayi Divisions, scattered in Kayin State and Bago Division, isolated in Rakhine State, upper Sagain and Magway Divisions with locally heavyfall in Taninthayi Division and isolated heavyfalls in Mon State and Yangon Division and weather and has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (5˚C) below normal in Kayin State and upper Sagain Division, (3˚C) to (4˚C) above normal in Kayin and Mon States, Bago and Ayeawady Divisions. (5˚C) below normal in Taninthayi Division and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant day temperature was Kalewa (40˚C). The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Launglon (12.52) inches, Myek (4.65) inches, Yezo and Central Yangon (4.14) inches each, Dawei (3.90) inches, Yangon (Kaba-Aye) (2.24) inches, Co co Island (2.12) inches and Mawlamyine (1.77) inches.

Maximum temperature on 20-5-2006 was 85°F. Minimum temperature on 21-5-2006 was 67°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 21-5-2006 was (96%).

Total sunshine hours on 20-5-2006 was nil.

Rainfalls on 21-5-2006 were (1.38) inches at Mingaladon, (2.24) inches at Kaba-Aye and (4.14) inches at Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2006 were (12.60) inches at Mingaladon, (14.09) inches at Kaba-Aye and (14.49) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (15) mph from Southeast at (11:50) hours MST on 20-5-2006.

Bay inference: Monsoon is strong to vigorous in the Andaman Sea, Central Bay and South Bay. Weather is partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 22-5-2006: Weather will be partly cloudy in lower Sagain and Magway Divisions and rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Kayah States, scattered in Rakhine State, upper Sagain and Bago Divisions and widespread in the remaining States and Divisions with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Mon State, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Squalls with rough sea are likely at times Deltic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon-Taninthayi Coast. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35) to (40) neps. Seas will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of thundery conditions in Central Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring areas for 22-5-2006: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Yangon and adjoining areas for 22-5-2006: Some rain or thundershowers which will be heavy at times. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 22-5-2006: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (40%).
YANGON, 21 May—The Bangladeshi Delegation led by Foreign Secretary of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh Mr Hemayetuddin, who was on an official visit to the Union of Myanmar at the invitation of the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, paid a courtesy call on U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs at 3 pm on 19 May at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the call, the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh was accompanied by the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to Myanmar Mr Mohammed Karzzaman and the members of the Bangladesh delegation.

During their stay in Myanmar, the Bangladesh Delegation led by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Mr Hemayetuddin held High-level Bilateral Consultations with the Myanmar Delegation led by the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu on bilateral issues and mutually beneficial cooperation in the morning on 19 May at the Hotel Nikko Royal Lake. In the evening the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu and wife hosted a dinner in honour of the visiting Bangladesh Foreign Secretary and his wife and members of the delegation at the Hotel Nikko Royal Lake.

The Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh was accompanied by his wife, Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs Mr Mohammad Mohsin and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. The Bangladesh delegation also held a separate meeting with Col Maung Maung Than, Director-General of the Department of Immigration and National Registration in the afternoon on 19 May.

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Shwe Wah Tun (MPCE) and Lone Chaw (KLN) in action in final match of Above-Middleweight Class held at Youth Training Centre, Thuwunna on Sunday. The latter wins the match.— NLM

YANGON, 21 May—Nine members of Namtu Township National League for Democracy in Shan State (North) — Chairman U Mya Aung, Vice-Chairman-1 U Kyaw Nyein, Vice-Chairman-2 U Than Tun, Secretary-1 U Aik Kyan, Secretary-2 U Tin Tun, Treasurer Daw Khin Myint and executives Daw Kyi Kyi Myint, U San Win and U Kyaw Naing Oo — resigned of their own accord from the party by sending their resignation letters to NLD (HQ) and authorities concerned.

In the letter they said Namtu Township NLD was reconstituted in 2002 with the aim of serving the interest of the local people. But, a glance at the acts of NLD would reveal that it has been sticking to the policy of “Look West” and grabbing power. Besides, being jealous of peace and stability prevailing in the State, it is instigating the people to cause panic among them. Meanwhile, the government has been endeavouring for the development of their region in collaboration with the local people. As a result, PSLA of Special Region-7 and SSNA of Special Region-3 have exchanged arms for peace after realizing the goodwill of the government. So, the State as well as the local people of the region are now in a position to fully enjoy development fruits. Therefore, breaking away from the acts of NLD, they have decided to resign from the party and shut down the township NLD so as to work for the development of education, health and transport sectors of the region in cooperation with local authorities.

Apart from executive U Min Min Myo Naing of Namtu NLD, who has moved to the other area, all the remaining nine members have resigned of their own volition form the party, it is learnt. — MNA

Being jealous of peace and stability prevailing in the State, NLD is instigating the people to cause panic

NLD sticking to policy of “Look West” and grabbing power

Members of Namtu Township NLD resign

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