General Thura Shwe Mann welcomes back Myanmar delegation from Meeting of Myanmar-Thai Regional Border Committee

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence together with members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, Lt-Gen Maung Bo and Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Aung Htwe of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, Maj-Gen Myint Hlaing and Maj-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence and senior military officers this evening welcomed Myanmar delegation that attended the 23rd Meeting of Myanmar-Thai Regional Border Committee held in Chiang Mai.

The delegation leader is Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Min Aung Hlaing and it comprises Chairman of Mon State Peace and Development Council Commander of South East Command Brig-Gen Thet Naing Win, Chairman of Taninthayi Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Khin Zaw Oo, Deputy Commander of Eastern Com-

Writers, publishers, and readers should be imbued with goodwill and correct views, but should not let themselves get out of the national cause. Only then, will the motto “Myanmarsar is ours” that was claimed more than 70 years ago be regenerated. As a gesture of hailing the fourth conference of the Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, I would like to present an idea that the people can turn a new page of Myanmar literature by enhancing the literature of their own.

The one that never changes despite the many new things the advancing era has brought into life is the wedding dress of the bride. As for every Myanmar woman, she will have to wear the dress only once in her life as getting married in the Myanmar society of life is a serious matter needing sensible consideration and thinking before being done.

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Educate people on balanced diet and nutrition

Nutrition and malnutrition depend on social and economic conditions of a society. Whether children can obtain adequate nourishment rests especially on their mother’s knowledge on health, diet and nutrition, eating habits, environmental cleanliness and personal hygiene.

In developing countries, fifty per cent of children’s deaths is due to undernourishment. In addition, the majority of people living in more than 100 countries are suffering from iodine deficiency and it is because of the aquatic and terrestrial conditions of the region they live in. Children with a deficiency of vitamin A are liable to blindness and can have less resistance to various kinds of infectious diseases.

In Myanmar, for the nourishment of women and children, various measures such as vaccination, control of diseases, environmental cleanliness, school health care, maternal and child health care and health education are being taken.

As a preventive measure against anaemic, pregnant women have been constantly fed iron tablets. Moreover, children aged between six months and five years have been fed vitamin A together with polio vaccine on national immunization days every year since 1993.

We believe that people will be able to stay healthy and live long if health staff constantly work in concert with members of social organizations and personnel of other respective departments in educating people on balanced diet and nutrition, feeding children vitamin A and pregnant women iron tablets and controlling the quality of iodized salt.

Waso robes for Sangha in Majjima

YANGON, 29 June — Paradesi Sangha Committee in India today invited wellwishers to donate cash and robes to its 28th Waso Robe Offering ceremony. The robe offering ceremony is held annually to offer robes to over 500 members of the Sangha in 11 monasteries and eight universities in Majjima, Assam and Manipur in India. Those wishing to donate may contact Ph 01-545215, 01-545216, 01-555173, 01-727746, 01-536348 and 01-542236 not later than 17 July. — MNA

28th work coord meeting of law officers at state/division, district levels concludes

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — A work coordination meeting of law officers at state, division and district levels concluded at the meeting hall of Attorney-General’s Office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, attended by Attorney-General U Aye Maung. Next, Deputy Directors-General of Attorney-General’s Office and directors replied to the reports of offices of states and divisions. Afterwards, responsible personnel reported on implementation of e-Government. Afterwards, Deputy Attorneys-General and the Director-General gave necessary instructions.

Next, Attorney-General U Aye Maung gave instructions on speedy implementation of minutes of the meeting and efficient use of fuel and called for observance of the law. — MNA

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

NAY PYI TAW, 30 June — The Government of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr Felipe Frydman, as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Argentine Republic to the Union of Myanmar.

Mr Felipe Frydman is accredited to the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok.

Olympic Day Commemorative Swimming Contest held

YANGON, 29 June — Organized by Myanmar Swimming Federation, the Swimming Contest in commemoration of the International Olympic Day 2006 was held at the National Swimming Pool on U Wisara Road, here, this afternoon.

After the competitions, members of the Panel of Patrons of the MSF Daw Mu Mu Win presented prizes to winners in the women’s 50-m and 100-m free style events; member of the Panel of Patrons Daw Soe Wut Yi, winners in the women’s 200-m free style event; and Vice-President of MSF U Tint Hsan (Chairman of ACE Construction), winners in the men’s 50-m and 100-m free style events.

Vice-President of MSF U Cho Maung gave prizes to the winners in the men’s 200-m free style event; medical in-charge Dr Daw Tin Hnin Thu, winners in the women’s junior 25-m event; and Executive Daw Myat Thura Soe, winners in the men’s junior 25-m event. — NLM

4th literary Conference on 1, 2 July

YANGON, 29 June — Representatives of state division Writers and Journalists Associations are invited to participate in the 4th Literary Conference of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association to be held on 1 and 2 July in Pyidaungsu Hall in Kyaukka Sports Grounds.

Representatives are urged to register at the management committee of the conference at the grounds by 30 June.

The preliminary meeting of the conference will be held in the evening of 30 June. — MNA

School building handed over

YANGON, 29 June — A new school building in Dotan Village, DaikU Township, Bago Division, was handed over to Ministry of Education on 24 May.

Chairman of DaikU Township Peace and Development Council U Myint Sein handed over the primary school which was constructed at a cost of K 5 million to the head of the Township’s Education Department. The funds for the construction was contributed by Sayadaw U Sumana (Hpowintaung), Sayadaw U Jotika of Mandalay and U Panna Sami of Popa. — MNA
India, China relations in “good shape”

BEIJING, 28 June — As India and China held fresh round of their border talks on Monday, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said bilateral ties were in “good shape” since the enunciation of “Guiding Principles” for the settlement of the problem.

“Our bilateral ties are in good shape since last year when I visited India and we established the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the settlement of the India-China boundary question,” Wen told India’s Special Representative for border talks and National Security Adviser MK Narayanan when the latter made a courtesy call on him.

“You are not only the Special Representative (for the India-China border talks) but also a friendship envoy,” Wen, who returned Sunday after a seven-nation official tour of Africa, told Narayanan.

The Chinese Premier said India and China have formed a strategic partnership last year during his visit to New Delhi and since then, frequent high-level exchanges have taken place which has boosted bilateral ties.

Earlier, Narayanan and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo held two rounds of talks here following their informal parleys in the northwestern city of Xian. — MNA/PTI

Two US soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 28 June — Two US soldiers were killed in two attacks in Baghdad and Iraq’s western province of Anbar on Tuesday, the US military said.

A soldier, assigned to the 1st Brigade, 1st Armoured Division, was killed in enemy action in Anbar on Tuesday, the military said in a statement.

Separately, another soldier from the Multi-National Division in Baghdad was killed early on Tuesday when an improvised explosion device detonated while he was on a foot patrol in the southern capital, the military said in separate statement.

Earlier in the day, the military said that a third soldier died of wound sustained during military operation in the western Iraqi province on Monday.

Two kidnapped UN peacekeepers freed by Congolese militiamen

KINSHASA, 28 June — Two UN peacekeepers who were taken hostage in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) last month were released on Tuesday.

The two were among seven Nepali UN peacekeepers who were kidnapped on 28 May by the Revolutionary Movement of Congo (MRC).

The two were in good health, the spokesman said, adding that the United Nations was doing its best to try to secure the release of other five captured peacekeepers.

He gave no further details.

The release of the soldiers came one day after the Congolese rebel group warned that the militiamen would execute their captives if any fresh attacks were launched against them, referring to a clash between the DRC’s Government troops with MRC militiamen late last week.

The UN said earlier that the militia attacked the government troops, but the United Nations had not been involved.

The seven peacekeepers were captured after a patrol of Nepali soldiers were ambushed by MRC militiamen about 100 kilometres northeast of Bunia, the capital of the restive Ituri District.

Around 17,000 UN peacekeepers are stationed in the country to help the government troops drive well-armed rebels out of civilian zones in time for elections on 30 July.

Since the UN mission started in 1999, 31 peacekeepers or observers have been killed in the country.

Rainstorm affects 270,000 people in Guizhou

GUIZHOU, 28 June — Two days of torrential rains in southwest China’s Guizhou Province have caused flash floods and destroyed cottages along the Duliujiang River which flows across the neighbouring Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, affecting the lives of more than 270,000 people.

The Guizhou Provincial Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters said on Monday that the rain hit the province at 8:00 am on Sunday and covered eight counties in the province’s southern and southeastern regions, with the maximum daily precipitation of 251 millimetres in some areas.

The rainstorm blocked the traffic in some counties and pushed many sections of the upper reaches of the Duliujiang River to the danger level, affecting over 270,000 people, said the headquarters.

Poll shows 57% of Americans want Iraq withdrawal plan

WASHINGTON, 28 June — Fifty-seven per cent of Americans want the US Congress to pass a resolution to outline a plan for withdrawing US troops from Iraq, according to the latest survey results released by The USA Today on Tuesday.

The USA Today/Gallup poll also found precisely half of the respondents support withdrawal of all US forces immediately or within 12 months.

The percentage of Americans who say US President George W Bush has “a clear plan for handling the situation in Iraq” has dropped to 31 per cent, a new low.

The poll was taken Friday through Sunday among 1,000 US adults.

The results show the public support for the ideas behind the Democrat Party’s proposals, though they were defeated in the Senate last week.

One of the proposals called for starting withdrawing US troops from Iraq by year’s end and withdrawing all US combat troops from Iraq by 1 July, 2007.

Another proposal was a nonbinding resolution that called on the government to start “a phased redeployment of US forces” by this year’s end but did not set a deadline for completion.

Meanwhile, an uptick in optimism toward the war after the killing of al-Qaeda operative Abu Musab al-Zarqawi earlier this month seems to have evaporated.

Richard Eichenberg, a scholar at Tufts University who studies presidential polling, said public views on Iraq are too set to be changed by momentary developments, even positive ones.

Two killed in Iraq, two UN peacekeepers freed by Congolese militiamen

KINSHASA, 28 June — A boy plays in a ball on a river at Guiyang, Southwest China’s Guizhou Province, on 25 June, 2006. — INTERNET

A man looks over the levee at the rising waters of the Susquehanna River as the skyline of Wilkes Barre is seen in Pennsylvania, on 28 June, 2006. Wilkes Barre residents that live in the flood plain areas of the Susquehanna River are under orders to evacuate until the waters recede. — INTERNET

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Thailand to hold Int’l ICT Expo 2006 in August

BANGKOK, 28 June — Thailand will hold its annual International ICT Expo in early August, which is expected to draw some 300 international firms from 26 countries and regions, Deputy Prime Minister and caretaker Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Minister Suchai Charoenratnakul said on Monday.

Suchai told the media that he expected the fair, to be held on the outskirts of Bangkok on 2-6 August, would attract a total of 300,000 visitors.

About 10 per cent of the visitors, or around 30,000, would be professional ICT operators, he projected.

Foreign journalists have expressed their interests in covering the grand ICT exhibition, according to the Deputy Prime Minister.

It is the third consecutive year for Bangkok to host such an ICT expo, in which innovative ICT products will be on display and operators will have chance to meet with prospective customers. The exhibition will cover a vast space of 60,000 square metres inside the exhibition centre.

Thailand’s Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will preside over the opening ceremony scheduled on 2 August.

A meteorological expert lets go of a balloon used to collect weather information in Cape Canaveral, Florida, on 28 June. —INTERNET

Two US citizens face questioning over visa violation

JAKARTA, 28 June — Two US citizens were flown to Jakarta Tuesday following their arrest in eastern province of Papua for allegedly misusing their tourist visas to attend a meeting of local tribal group.

“We have sent the two US citizens to Jakarta at the request of the director general of immigration,” Papua immigration office head Giri Hariyanto was quoted by the national Antara news agency as saying.

The two, identified as Brian Joseph Keane, 44, and Casey Kellar Box, 21, were arrested Monday after attending a meeting organized by a local tribal group at a hotel in the provincial capital of Jayapura, using their tourist visas.

MNA/Xinhua

Fake cops steal 100 kilos of cocaine from Milan lab

MILAN, 29 June — Four thieves disguised as policemen stole 100 kilos (220 lb) of cocaine worth some 10 million euros (12.59 million US dollars) from a medical laboratory in Milan on Tuesday, Italian police said.

Police said the robbers had pretended to be carabinieri, Italian police, to gain access to the laboratory, then asked two medics to accompany them to the room where the cocaine was stored, wrapped in individual parcels.

There, they tied up the medics with plastic tape, snatched the cocaine parcels and left the laboratory, police said. Police were unable to give details on how the robbers managed to smuggle such a large amount out of the building.

MNA/Reuters

Peruvian andean women take part in a protest against a free trade deal during a march in Lima, on 28 June, 2006, after Peru’s Congress ratified a free trade deal with the United States on Wednesday. —INTERNET

Two British soldiers, 12 Taleban militants killed in Afghanistan

KABUL, 28 June — Two British soldiers and 12 Taleban militants were killed on Tuesday in a battle in the southern Helmand Province of Afghanistan, officials said.

“At around 7 o’clock this morning, the enemies attacked Afghan and British troops in Sangin District of Helmand Province. As a result, two British soldiers were killed and another was wounded,” a spokesman for the British troops told local media.

“Twelve Taleban insurgents including a local commander were killed in the battle, which lasted from 7:00 am to 9:00 am local time,” Haji Mohaiuddin Khan, spokesman for the provincial government, told Xinhua.

MNA/Xinhua

Horses fight during the “Rapa Das Bestas” event in Cedeira, northwestern Spain, on 25 June, 2006. —INTERNET

EPM on ASEAN Charter convenes in Singapore

SINGAPORE, 28 June — The 10-member Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Charter started its fourth meeting in Singapore on Tuesday.

Chaired by Malaysian representative Tun Musa Hitam, the EPG will continue to discuss recommendations on the directions and nature of the ASEAN Charter, as well as consulting with civil society and business representatives from the region, according to a statement issued by Singapore’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The meeting will end on Thursday.

Tasked by ASEAN leaders at the 11th ASEAN Summit held in Malaysia’s Kuala Lumpur last December, the EPG has met regularly and is scheduled to present its report at this year’s ASEAN Summit in December.

The Charter is expected to help strengthen ASEAN integration and provide a vision on the future direction of the organization, which groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia may have nuclear power plant in next five years

JAKARTA, 28 June — Indonesia will likely have a nuclear power plant for electricity within the next five years if the country begins the building of the plant this year, Indonesian Minister of Research and Technology Kusmayanto Kadiman said here on Tuesday.

According to the minister, Vice-President Jusuf Kalla had instructed to accelerate the supply of electricity to meet the country’s strong demand and nuclear energy was thought to be one of the main solutions.

The minister said that currently state-owned electricity company PT PLN had already signed an agreement with South Korea’s Hydro and Nuclear Power Company for establishment of nuclear power plant.

MNA/Xinhua

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MNA/Xinhua
Cambodia, Malaysia to strengthen bilateral cooperation

Siem Reap (Cambodia), 28 June—Cambodia and Malaysia on Tuesday reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen bilateral relations through the expansion of various areas of cooperation for the mutual benefits.

Cambodia and Malaysia made their reaffirmation at the second meeting of the Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation held in Cambodia’s tourism city of Siem Reap from Monday to Tuesday.

Cambodian Foreign Minister Hor Namhong and his Malaysian counterpart Dato Seri Syed Hamid Albar led their delegations attending the meeting.

During the meeting, they discussed a wide range of bilateral issues of mutual interest including security, trade, investment, tourism, agriculture, transportation and technical cooperation, according to a joint statement.

Both sides said that they will continue to discuss and identify possible areas of collaboration on security as well as on the issues of illegal migration and transnational crime and on the Cambodian proposal to sign a memorandum of understanding on the trafficking of women and children.

On agriculture, the two countries agreed to enhance cooperation through trading activities, exchange of information and human resource development.

They also discussed the provision by Malaysia of used railway tracks for the construction of the missing link between Poipet and Siem Reap, as part of the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) as well as on increasing air services between Malaysia and Cambodia. —MNA/Xinhua

Indians celebrate chariot festival

NEW DELHI, 28 June—Indians began to celebrate the 129th festival of chariot procession Tuesday at a temple city of east India’s Orissa, attracting thousands of pilgrims and tourists. According to Indo-Asian News Agency, at least 400,000 people have visited Puri, 56 kilometres from the state capital Bhubaneswar.

“We hope to see more than one million gather in the city by evening,” said a district official.

The nine-day festival is held annually here to worship the Hindu deity Lord Jagannath, his brother Balram and sister Subhadra.

The festival began with the idols of three deities being taken out of the temple with an elaborate royal ritual. The deities were put on three chariots pulled by devotees and travelled through a main street of Puri and then reached another temple called Gundicha in the town. They will return to their own temple after the ritual. The deities were put on three chariots pulled by devotees and travelled through a main street of Puri and then reached another temple called Gundicha in the town. They will return to their own temple after the ritual.

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A farmer feeds his eels at a pond in Zhanggou County of Xiantao city, central China’s Hubei Province on 27 June, 2006. China’s central treasury allocated 297.5 billion yuan (37.2 billion US dollars) to facilitate farmland and rural development and raise farmers’ income last year, up 13.3 percent from 2004, said Finance Minister Jin Renqing on 27 June, 2006.—INTERNET

Santiago becomes third most expensive

S American city

SANTIAGO, 28 June—Chile’s capital, Santiago, has become the third most expensive city in South America, according to a world list published on Tuesday by American consultancy Mercer Human Resource Consulting in its annual report.

On this year’s list, Santiago, after two Brazilian cities—Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro—ranks third among the most expensive South American cities.

Santiago, which was in 128th place on last year’s world list, has moved up to 91st. The movement is due not only to the local inflation, but also the Chilean peso’s strong appreciation against the US dollar, according to Luis Fernando Higuera, Mercer’s representative in Chile.

“...As the comparison is in dollars, when we convert our figures into March 2006 dollars, we get much higher prices than we only apply domestic inflation,” said Higuera.

On this year’s list, Moscow, capital of Russia, replaces Tokyo as the world’s most expensive city. Seoul, capital of South Korea, has moved up three places to the second.

The first two most expensive South American cities, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, rank 34th and 40th respectively on the list.

Mercer survey studies the cost of living in 144 cities worldwide, measuring the cost of over 200 items, including housing, transportation, food, clothing, household goods and entertainment.

MNA/Xinhua

A mechanic works on a ship engine at the Dubai Dry Docks, on 28 June, 2006. Established in 1971, the yard provides ship repair, conversion and building facilities between Europe and the Far East.—INTERNET

US Army, Marines cite high cost to replace weapons

WASHINGTON, 28 June—Repairing, replacing and upgrading worn-out equipment in Iraq and Afghanistan would cost 17.1 billion US dollars in the next fiscal year, the US Army’s top general said on Tuesday, warning that failure to foot the bill could harm troop readiness.

Army Chief of Staff General Peter Schoomaker said that sum included 4.9 billion US dollars in “reset” costs that were not funded in fiscal 2006. Military equipment costs in Iraq and Afghanistan were seen at around 12 billion US dollars to 13 billion US dollars a year for each year they continued and up to three years thereafter, he said.

Schoomaker told a House Armed Services Committee hearing that if the equipment was not replaced or repaired, “You’ll see a rapid drop off in readiness”. Marine Corps Commandant General Michael Hagee said his service faced a bill of 11.9 billion US dollars due to the high rate of wear and tear on military equipment. Both generals urged Congress to fully fund the needed investments in equipment, noting that it often took several years to actually get new armoured trucks, helicopters and repaired vehicles once the money was approved.

They also stressed that efforts to modernize the Army and Marines should continue, partly to help offset rising personnel costs. Schoomaker said it would be “foolish” to cut the Army’s Future Combat Systems modernization programme because it would help the Army become more efficient and mobile.

The generals defended the Bush Administration’s strategy of requesting funds to “reset” the military as part of emergency spending bills, noting that these costs were directly related to damage and wear from wartime use. The Army faced about 56 billion US dollars in equipment shortages at the start of the Iraq war in the spring of 2003 and it was critical to avoid the same predicament next time, he said.

MNA/Reuters

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A traditional ceremony of “Chaccu” at the Pampa Galeras National Reserve in the Andean highlands of Ayacucho on 24 June, 2006.—INTERNET

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The Andean highlands of Ayacucho on 24 June, 2006. —INTERNET
PM says Pakistan promoting engineering industry

ISLAMABAD, 28 June—Pakistani Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz said the government is taking steps to promote engineering industry by diversifying its base and producing value added products, according to local private Geo TV report.

Presiding over a meeting here Tuesday to review the performance of Engineering Development Board (EDB) and development of engineering industry in Pakistan, Aziz said that the steps taken by the government have paved way for a dynamic engineering sector in Pakistan to facilitate capacity and production.

He said the engineering sector should focus on modernization and innovative technologies to improve the quality and competitiveness of locally manufactured products.

Aziz said that the market demand for cars has expanded to 200,000 cars. Local production of cars have gone up to 160,000 in 2006 from approximately 80,000 cars manufactured in 1999. Pakistan, which was manufacturing 90,000 motorcycles in 1999, is today producing 650,000 motorcycles.

The auto mobile sector showed a growth of 50 per cent last year. Several parts manufacturing companies have set up their plants in Pakistan.

The Prime Minister said that expansion in auto industry has led to a substantial increase in employment generation. The industrial sector has employed 190,000 people so far — MNA/Xinhua

Flooding cripples US capital, closes attractions

WASHINGTON, 28 June — Floods that soaked the US capital kept tax collectors and federal agents from work on Monday and closed attractions including Smithsonian museums and the home of the Declaration of Independence.

With as much as 7 inches (18 centimetres) of rain falling since Sunday in an East Coast deluge, flooded basements or power outages forced the Internal Revenue Service, Commerce Department, Justice Department and the National Archives to close.

“The nation’s attic” — the Smithsonian Institution — also was hit. The Smithsonian-run American history and natural-history museums and the National Zoo were all closed.

A century-old elm tree toppled at the White House and cars floated at flooded intersections on Constitution Avenue, which runs past tourist attractions such as the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial.

The federal government told its 280,000 area workers they could take leave if they were unable to get to work. Amtrak cancelled seven early passenger trains between Washington and New York, and commuter rail service was disrupted. Mud washed onto the Capital Beltway highway that circles the city, closing lanes.

The National Archives, which houses the Declaration of Independence, the US Constitution and other treasured documents, said inspections revealed “no damage to original records”, but it was to stay closed through Tuesday.

The White House also escaped damage when the elm tree fell near the north door to the presidential residence, said spokesman Bill Line for the National Park Service, which maintains the grounds.

Heavy rain fell intermittently on Monday and more was predicted.

“We have the potential for more problems, especially on Tuesday,” said National Weather Service meteorologist Andy Woodcock. A flash flood warning was in effect for the greater Washington metropolitan area until Monday evening, and a flood watch was in effect until Tuesday, the weather service said. Heavy rains and flooding also caused problems elsewhere along the US East Coast.

MP3 market shrinking in major Chinese cities

BEIJING, 28 June—Recent data from German-based GfK research institute shows that the market for MP3 players in China’s seven major cities has fallen over the past three months.

The sales of MP3 players in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Wuhan, Shenyang and Xi’an have dropped an average of 12 per cent in the past three months, China Business News reported on Tuesday.

GfK data revealed that sales of MP3 players began to decline in China last October and promotions by MP3 producers in March failed to reverse the trend.

MP3 market

California Port closed after threat

LOS ANGELES, 28 June — US authorities closed a major California seaport on Monday after finding a threat, apparently directed at President George W Bush, written in the hold of a cargo ship carrying bananas from Guatemala.

Bomb squads searching the vessel found no signs of explosives but the port remained sea traffic while nearby ships and buildings were investigated, a US Coast Guard spokesman said.

A second Coast Guard spokesman said the threat appeared to be directed at Bush and his “Jewish cronies” and said, in part, “This nitro’s for you”.

The port of Hueneme, 60 miles (96 kilometres) north of Los Angeles, is the only commercial deep water port between Los Angeles and San Francisco and serves as a point of import and export for automobiles, produce and forest products.

It is also the only military deep water port between San Diego and Puget Sound in Washington State. — MNA/Reuters

Kuwaiti men sell teapots at an old souk in Mubarekiya in Kuwait City, on 28 June, 2006. — MNA/Xinhua

A two-seat Smart car is displayed during a news conference in Detroit, Michigan, on 28 June, 2006. DaimlerChrysler AG said on Wednesday it will launch its two-seater Smart minicar in the United States in early 2008, as fuel prices shift consumers’ attention to more economical vehicles. — INTERNET

Poll shows most Japanese oppose US beef trade restart

Tokyo, 28 June — A large majority of Japanese respondents to a poll — 71 per cent — said they were opposed or “fairly opposed” to Japan’s decision to lift a ban on US beef imports, a survey by the Yomiuri newspaper showed on Tuesday.

Tokyo agreed on 21 June to resume US beef imports, which had been suspended for five months due to fears of mad cow disease, after it completes inspection of beef processing plants authorized by the US government as suppliers to Japan.

By gender, 76 per cent of the women said they opposed lifting the ban compared with 64 per cent of the men.

About 60 per cent of the respondents said they did not want to eat US beef even after imports resume, a move that could come as early as late next month.

The online survey, which was conducted jointly by the Japanese language daily Yomiuri Shimbun and NTT Resonant Inc. received 1,059 valid answers from respondents aged from 14 to 84, the daily said. — MNA/Reuters
Today, literacy, media, journalism and most of the creative arts are flowing together. They are multimedia. Writing, the main function of literature, expands to documentation and dissemination of information, composing, organizing facts and making history and then merges with related arts.

The Myanmar history has showed that the development of the nation reached its peak when its literature flourished. The period reflects literature and vice versa. In this regard, a writer has to exert his creative power, practice and goodwill, and that is crucial in any period.

The goodwill rises from the writer or composer concerned and dominates readers, and those who study arts or have sympathy. Such domination is converted into publications and periodicals that are then distributed throughout the nation. A resource like a library is replete with good ideas that can enhance national interests and develop human resources. Without reading, a person cannot have his intellectual power enhanced by the literature in books.

The wider a field is, the more a work of arts needs to replete with essence and effectiveness. It should also be a creative and informative one with correct views and ideas. Only with correct views and ideas, can a book guide the readers.

Today, literature is beyond the limit of interest and mental pleasure, and has become a field of a profession. The change is unprecedented. There has been an increase in the number of publishers, readers, songs, libraries, reading centres, those engaged directly or indirectly in the literature and freelance writers. So, priority should not be given to production of pot boilers.

And there have been a wide range of modern equipment and technologies, with which publications and periodicals can be published and distributed on a large scale in a short time. So, every reader should be capable of assessing with the national outlook the works he is reading, listening or watching.

To create a work, a writer has to have an idea and exert his creative power. So, works of arts should not be far from pragmatic world. Good books are of benefits to the readers and broaden the horizon of their intellectual power, knowledge, nationalistic fervour, and the spirit of making sacrifices for independence.

The part literature plays is greater and more delicate in the drive for building a nation. A writer should constantly make self-study and keep abreast of current affairs to be able to create a creative and informative work. Besides, he should be well equipped with the spirit of cooperating with others.

Now, Myanmar has got necessary equipment and intellectual power enhanced by the literature in books. Myanmar literature keeps flourishing thanks to the support of the government and the people. No one can deny that it has gained a foothold in various sectors. Moreover, serious attention should be given to qualitative improvement. Necessary steps should therefore be taken for increasing the number of writers, readers and researchers for further flourishing of the literature in the interests of the nation and the people.

Ministry of Industry-1 Minister inspects progress of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory

YANGON, 29 June — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung met with officials of Myanmar Pharmaceutical Factory in Insein Township this morning.

The minister heard reports on products of the factory and arrangements for repairing the machines by the factory manager and officials and gave necessary instructions.

Next, the minister viewed units of the factory and production of tablets, capsules and injections.

At Special Pharmaceutical Factory No 2 Project, the minister inspected production of dihydroartemisinin powder, quinine sulphate powder and tablets produced from barks of cinchona.

Cinchona plants are being nurtured at Thandaunggyi region of Kayin State and Natyegan of Magway Division.

WB approves project to help Cambodia improve governance

PHNOM PENH, 29 June — The World Bank announced on Wednesday it has approved a new project to support Cambodia’s reform programme and help it improve governance and fight corruption.

The decision was made by World Bank’s Board of Executive Directors at Tuesday’s meeting.

“The new 14-million-US-dollar project, the Public Financial Management and Accountability Project, is seen as a key component of the Bank’s approach to helping improve governance and fight corruption,” the Bank said in a statement.

The Bank has taken actions this month to freeze 43 contracts worth 11.9 million dollars it funded for Cambodia, claiming it has found the misused funds and corruption in these contracts. — MNA/Xinhua
USDA Secretary-General U Htay Oo meeting with farmers in Hpatthaung Village in Zalun Township. — MNA

59th Central Council of Myanmar Red Cross Society held

YANGON, 29 June — The meeting of the 59th Central Council of Myanmar Red Cross Society was held at the meeting hall of extended building of Institute of Nursing (Yangon) this morning.

Present on the occasion were Chairman of MRC Dr Hla Myint and members, advisers, central council members, heads of department, chairman of state and division Red Cross Supervisory Committees and members.

First, Chairman of MRC Dr Hla Myint made an opening speech on the occasion. Next, executive director U Aung Than reported on implementation of the minutes and decisions of the meeting held on 26 and 27 June of 2006.

Afterwards, the deputy executive director, advisers and heads of department reported on completed tasks of Red Cross.

Next, the chairman of state and division Red Cross Supervisory Committee and officials reported on tasks carried out and the meeting ended for the first day.

The meeting continues tomorrow. — MNA

Minister meets resident representative of UNICEF

YANGON, 29 June — Secretary- General U Htay Oo met with USDA members and local peasants Hpathaung Village in Zalun, Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Division on 23 June.

During the meeting, Secretary-General U Htay Oo held discussions on increased production of agriculture, striving for per acre yield on 10 crops and rural development tasks.

Next, Secretary-General U Htay Oo together with USDA members arrived at Zalun and inspected maintenance of dams along the Ayeyawady river. Responsible personnel reported on condition of dams and water course in Zalun, Hinthada, Laymyatnya, Myanmaung and Kyangin along the Ayeyawady river with the use of charts and Secretary-General U Htay Oo gave necessary instructions on constant supervision of dams during the rainy season. — MNA

USDA Secretary-General U Htay Oo meets USDA members, inspects dams

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — Secretary-General of the Union Solidarity and Development Association U Htay Oo met with USDA members and local peasants Hpathaung Village in Zalun, Hinthada District, Ayeyawady Division on 23 June.

During the meeting, Secretary-General U Htay Oo held discussions on increased production of agriculture, striving for per acre yield on 10 crops and rural development tasks.

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Minister receives UNICEF resident representative

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein received resident representative of UNICEF Dr Ramesh Shrestha at his office in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

They held discussions on co-operative measures in education. Minister Dr Chan Nyein said he was glad to learn the appointment of the guest as resident representative of UNICEF to Myanmar.

Short-term and long-term plans were laid down to boost education sector and cooperative measures on education would be made with UNICEF, he said.

President of the Ministry of Economic Development, at his office here this morning. Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister Col Thurein Zaw and departmental officials of the Ministry. — MNA

Minister U Soe Tha receives Resident Representative of UNICEF

NAY PYI TAW, 28 June — Resident representative of UNICEF Mr Ramesh Shrestha called on U Soe Tha, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development, at his office here this morning.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister Col Thurein Zaw and departmental officials of the Ministry. — MNA

Myanmar to extend export of mango, watermelon, musk melon

NAY PYI TAW, 29 June — The Ministry of Commerce held a meeting with Myanmar mango, watermelon and musk melon growers, traders and exporters in Nay Pyi Taw on 26 June to coordinate measures for extended export of the crops.

Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein said that Myanmar enjoyed agricultural growth by 11.8 per cent in 2005-2006 fiscal year with year-by-year increase in trade volume. In 2005-06 financial year, the export of mango amounted to more than US$ 12 million, watermelon, US$ seven million, and musk melon, US$ four million.

The Head of State encouraged respective companies and local farmers to extend cultivation of cash crops in Mandalay Division and Shan State (South) for better income of the State, the merchants and the farmers.

The sown acreage of the crops in these regions has reached hundreds of thousands. Fruits can be harvested from the efforts in a few years.

He said that the purpose of the meeting is to translate the guidance of the Head of State on extended export of value-added foodstuff. A fruit growers, producers and exporters association is to be formed.

In conclusion, he pledged that the Ministry of Commerce will provide encouragement and help to achieve greater success.

Those present dealt with matters for extended export of mango, watermelon and musk melon, after which the minister assessed their discussions. — MNA

Minister Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein meeting with growers of mango, watermelon and musk melon, after which the minister assessed their discussions. — COMMERCE
Jade, Gems and Pearl Special Sales for 2006 continues

YANGON, 29 June — Gem merchants purchased 24 lots of jade through competitive bidding in Jade, Gems and Pearl Special Sales for 2006 yesterday. A total of 49 lots of jade were sold through competitive bidding on the same day. Altogether 33 lots of jade were sold through competitive bidding today. Within two days, a total of 82 lots of jade have been sold through the competitive bidding.

The rest of lots of jade were also being sold at night. So, Myanmar Convention Centre was packed with the gem merchants. Altogether 2,383 gem merchants at home and abroad are attending the special sales and the rest will be sold through competitive bidding tomorrow.

YCDC puts efforts for keeping drains clean

YANGON, 29 June — Yangon City Development Committee cleaned the drains on Yedashe Road in Bahan Township, on East Horse Race road in Tamwe Township and on Thanthuma Road in South Okkalapa Township today.

Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin went to the townships and inspected the tasks being carried out by YCDC for proper flow of drains in the areas. During his tour along with officials of YCDC, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin also inspected the roadworks in the townships and fulfilled the requirements.

Course opens to train welfare coordinators

YANGON, 29 June — Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee of Thongwa Township on 27 June opened an instructor course to train coordinators at grassroot level.

Members of Thongwa Township MCWSC and its sub-committees participated in the course. The course was opened with an address by Thongwa District MCWSC Chairperson Daw Khin Mya Mu.

At the opening ceremony, MCWSC Secretary Dr Myint Zaw explained the purpose of the course and tasks of the coordinators. — MNA

All Myanmars Take Pride

* Who are always involved in Myanmar history
* Great strength of the Myanmar women
  With pride of place tested on touch-stone
  With stamina as rigid and strong
  As tough and solid
  All Myanmars take pride
* Hand that rocks cradle, always stands out
  Up front without fail
  All Myanmars take pride.
* Myanmar girl, ‘cause she’s of Myanmar blood
  Is courteous and cultured, not losing tradition
  Have safeguarded it for ages
  One whose honour wasn’t tarnished
  All Myanmar Women, take pride
* ‘Cause Myanmar women, are of Myanmar blood
  They uphold their honour, let’s no one reproach it
  All Myanmar women take pride.
* ‘Cause Myanmar women, are geographically Asian
  They have been born into this land
  And their land of abode, for aeons
  Uphold their honour for ever for centuries.
  As evinced by Pondaung Stone-age finds
  Also Pyu Period Myanmars
  Existed for long historic period
  The resounding pride
  Of the staunch pride
  All Myanmars take pride.
It is fitting to point out that a fresh start cannot be built on the oblivion that some sugar-coated rhetoric is a problem-solver.

What we need are deeds and not words.

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba Mr. Felipe Perez Roque**

**Excellencies:**

Today is a particularly symbolic day. Cuba is a founding member of the Human Rights Council and the United States is not. Cuba was elected with the overwhelming support of 135 countries, more than two-thirds of the United Nations General Assembly, while the United States did not even dare to run as a candidate. Cuba relied on the secret vote for the same reason that the United States was afraid of it.

Cuba’s election epitomizes the victory of principles and truth; it stands as recognition of the value of our resilience. The absence of the United States is the defeat of lies; it is the moral punishment for the weakness of an empire.

The election entailed a demanding assessment. Each one got what they deserved. Cuba was rewarded and the United States was punished. Each one had its history and the voting countries were well aware of it. The African countries recalled that over 2,000 Cuban fighters had shed their generous blood in the struggle against the outrageous Apartheid regime, which the United States supported and furnished with weapons, even nuclear ones.

The election for Cuba came at a moment in which nearly 30,000 Cuban doctors were saving lives and alleviating the pain in 70 countries, while the United States reached that stage with over 150,000 invading soldiers, sent to kill and die in an unjust and illegal war.

The election for Cuba came with more than 300,000 patients from 26 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean who were recovering their eyesight thanks to the cost-free surgeries performed by Cuban eye specialists.

It came from the United States with over 100,000 civilians murdered and 2,500 American youths dead in a war concocted to steal a country’s oil and give away shameful contracts to a group of cronies of the President of the world’s sole superpower.

The election for Cuba came with more than 25,000 youths from 120 Third World countries, studying in its universities and colleges free of charge. It came for the United States with a concentration camp in Guantanamo, where prisoners are subjected to torture and where the official statement of the prison wardens was that the suicide of three human beings “is not an act of despair but an act of war and propaganda.”

The election for Cuba came with its airplanes carrying Cuban medical doctors and field hospitals to places where there had been natural disasters or epidemics. It came for the United States with its aircraft secretly carrying drugged and handcuffed prisoners from one jail to another.

The election for Cuba came with its proclamation of the prevalence of lawfulness over force, defending the United Nations Charter, demanding and fighting for a better world. It came for the United States with its proclamation of “if you are not on our side, you are against us.”

The election for Cuba came with its proposal of setting aside the trillion US dollars annually spent on weapons to fight off the yearly death of preventable causes of 11 million children under the age of five years and 600,000 poor women at childbirth. In the meantime, it came for the United States with its proclamation of its right to bomb and “pre-emptively” wipe out what it scornfully called “any dark corners of the world” if its designs were not obeyed. That is how the city of the Haggard if there were any attempts to prosecute an American soldier at the International Criminal Court.

While Cuba defended the rights of the Palestinian people, the United States was the main pillar behind Israel’s crimes and atrocities.

While under the striking force of Hurricane Katrina the US Government abandoned hundreds of thousands of people to their luck, most of them black and poor, Cuba immediately offered to send 1,100 doctors, who could have saved lives and alleviated their suffering.

I could go on and on listing reasons until tomorrow. I just want to add that it is the Government of the United States, not its people, which does not have a seat today at a member of the Council. The American people will be represented in the others, including Cuba’s seat. Our delegation will also speak out for the rights of the American people and, particularly, for the rights of its most discriminated and excluded sectors.

Now, there is truth in the fact that the United States was not alone in its gross and desperate schemes and pressures to prevent Cuba’s election. A handful of its allies followed them to the very end. The usual posse: beneficaries of the unjust and exclusion-oriented world order, most of them former colonial metropolises, which have not yet paid off their historical debt to their once-colonies.

Cuba is perfectly aware, even to its barest details, of the secret agreement negotiated in Brussels through which the European Union undertook not to vote for Cuba and then work closely with the United States against our candidature. But they failed famously.

It turned out that Cuba was elected without its support and its uncomfortable ally, which they need as an instrument of new pressures and media campaigns.

The corridors and halls of this building are now reverberating with repeated calls for “a fresh start” and “breathing fresh air into the new Council” — precisely by those who are responsible for the manipulation, hypocrisy and selectivity that caused the Commission on Human Rights to run aground.

It is fitting to point out that a fresh start cannot be built on the oblivion of what has been happening or the simulation that some sugar-coated rhetoric is a problem-solver. What we need are deeds and not words.

If there is any truth to the statements by the spokespersons of the European Union and we are actually faced with a “mezcal” then we are still awaiting their rectification. Not because of Cuba. Not because they colluded with the United States to try to prevent our election. Not because they have never been able to have an ethical and independent policy towards Cuba.

We are awaiting a rectification to the attitude of the European Union, which has year prevented the Commission on Human Rights from adopting an investigation into the massive, flagrant and systematic human rights violations at Guantanamo Naval Base.

A rectification to the silent complicity with which they allowed hundreds of secret CIA flights carrying kidnapped people and the establishment of clandestine prisons right on European soil, where prisoners are tortured and harassed. So far, the European Union has hypocritically hindered the investigation and expropriation of these events.

The European Union has not mustered the courage to serve exemplary sanctions on the miserable manifestations of lack of respect for other religions and customs.

The European Union was an accomplice to the United States in turning the former commission into some sort of Inquisition Tribunal against the countries of the South. We just hope that it will not happen again now.

The European Union has not even acknowledged its historical debt to the nearly 100 countries— currently independent nations after years of struggle and sacrifice— which were its pillaged colonies when, fifty-seven years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted, which paradoxically stated that: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”

**Excellencies:**

This session can usher in a new stage in the struggle to create a real system for the promotion and protection of all human rights for all the inhabitants of the planet, and not just for the rich and privileged.

A radical change will be required to that end; a real revolution in the concepts and methods that weighed down the defunct Commission.

Cuba does not indulge in wishful thinking about the real willingness of the developed countries, allies of the United States— to take that significant and historical step. However, it will give them the benefit of the doubt. It will wait and watch them.

Cuba can be counted upon if we work towards fulfilling the promises that have been trumped. If the past repeats itself and the Council becomes battlefield again, from now on Cuba can be counted upon to turn, one more time, into a fighter in the trenches of ideas of the Third World.

Cuba cannot be counted upon to turn the Council into an exclusive tribunal against the undeveloped countries and ensure the impunity of those in the North. Nor can it be relied upon to use the Council’s suspension clause against rebellious countries or to continue using, in a politicized and selective fashion, the country resolutions to punish those that do not bow their head.

Cuba cannot be counted upon to use the new universal periodical review mechanism as an instrument of new pressures and media campaigns.

Nor can Cuba be counted upon to defend lies and act hypocritically.

Cuba can be counted upon to fight for truth and transparency, to defend the right to independence, to self-determination, to social justice, to equality. And also to defend the right to food, to education, to health, to dignity, the right to a dignified life.
Culture is the heart of a nation. Race may extinct together with the loss of cultural and traditional heritage that we must preserve. We all should accept the fact that it is the inborn duty for all of us to preserve and protect our traditions and culture which are like the nation’s heart.

As for Myanmar, it is a country that has cherished and preserved her own traditions and culture since time immemorial. Thanks to the efforts of the historians, we have witnessed the discovery of our many near extinct cultural heritage together with firm historical evidences.

The mode of dress of women plays an important role in preserving our traditions and culture worthy of protection.

Historical records bear witness to the fact that the style of feminist costumes have been always gentle, civilized and nice throughout the successive eras in Myanmar.

During over 100 years of colonial rule, Myanmar women were yielded to the influences of Western culture and mode of dress. They with great diligence safeguarded national prestige and characteristics with patriotism during the years. Normally, human style of dress and social lives, professions, thoughts and concepts always change gradually together with the passage of time.

But we must be aware of the fact that those changes should not go against Myanmar way of life and national traits and all our adaptations must be free from alien influence.

Every advanced nation has its own programmes to preserve and develop its own culture. We must discard what is unnecessary and preserve what is necessary according to the changing order.

The work of preserving and preserving traditions and culture doesn’t mean blindly following all the old rules.

We are sad to learn that Myanmar mode of dress and traditions and culture are gradually waning like a decaying painting. We must protect our traditions and culture and style of dress against domination of decadent culture and costumes.

Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation sponsored a show demonstrating the mode of dress of Myanmar women of successive eras on 2 July 2005 to hail the Myanmar Women’s Day 2005, with the aim of letting international community and new generation women know and understand the gentle style of attiring of Myanmar women, and enabling today’s Myanmar girls and young women to have interest in invaluable cultural heritage, and to take pride in the Myanmar styles of attiring of the successive eras.

Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation sponsored a show demonstrating the mode of dress of Myanmar women of successive eras on 2 July 2005 to hail the Myanmar Women’s Day 2005, with the aim of letting international community and new generation women know and understand the gentle style of attiring of Myanmar women, and enabling today’s Myanmar girls and young women to have interest in invaluable cultural heritage, and to take pride in the Myanmar styles of attiring of the successive eras.

It is fitting to point out that …

Montenegro becomes 192nd member of UN

UNITED NATION, 29 June — Montenegro on Wednesday became the 192nd member of the United Nations, a month after it ended its 88-year partnership with Serbia that completed the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

“I declare the Republic of Montenegro admitted to membership in the United Nations,” UN General Assembly President Jan Eliasson announced after calling for approval by acclamation in the 191-nation body.

General Assembly members then broke into applause as the Balkan country’s President, Filip Vujanovic, Foreign Minister Miodrag Vlahovic and UN envoy Nebojsa Kakujdjevic were escorted to their new seats, next to the Mongolian delegation.

MNA/Reuters

Geese swim past a “no swimming” sign as floodwaters roll down the Brandywine River in Wilmington, Delaware, on 28 June, 2006.—INTERNET

Wish Myanmar women look graceful

Moe Shwe Zin Oo

The one that never changes despite the many new things the advancing era has brought into life is the wedding dress of the bride. As for every Myanmar woman, she will have to wear the dress only once in her life as getting married in the Myanmar society of life is a serious matter needing sensible consideration and thinking before being done.

The endeavours of Myanmar Women to preserve and protect their civilized way of living and dressing throughout the successive eras are worthy of putting into record.

Moreover, throughout the successive eras of the thousand-year old history and till now Myanmar women have been playing their respective roles in serving the interest of the nation and the people, striving to develop the Myanmar society, nurturing and developing the new generation and discharging the historic duties.

Myanmar women who have been civilized and gentle and endowed with qualifications and honourable attributes are models in preserving, protecting and promoting traditions and culture of the nation.

Since yore, Myanmar national brethren have been living in harmony and in weal or woe in the Union of Myanmar with their own life styles, culture, customs and language.

As the saying, which goes, “The earth cannot swallow the whole race, but racial domination can”, it is the bounden duty of the entire people including womankind to preserve and safeguard the traditions and culture from alien domination.

Modernization and decadent culture are different from one another. I wish Myanmar women to look beautiful and graceful according to Myanmar traditions and culture by wearing customary and civilized costumes, and with this article I honour the Myanmar Women’s Day.

(Translation: TMT)

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Iran accuses Western nations of impeding its scientific progress

JAKARTA, 28 June—Iran on Tuesday accused the Western countries of keeping trying to impede it from developing science and technology by using the issue of its nuclear programmes.

At a Press conference after a meeting with Indonesian Vice-President Jusuf Kalla, visiting Iranian Minister of Science, Research and Technology Mohammad Mehdi Zahedi asked for joint faith against the developed countries’ discrimination of the developing countries in the field of science. “It is strange why the countries which have already owned nuclear weapons and even have used the weapons, persistently boycott and impose sanctions to all scientific researches in Iran,” he said.

MNA/Xinhua
Coffee drinking may lower diabetes risk

NEW YORK, 28 June — Consumption of coffee, particularly the decaffeinated variety, is associated with a reduced risk of diabetes, according to a report in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

The study is not the first to document this association. However, in previous studies it was unclear if the relationship was true among people of different ages and body weights and if the caffeine component was the ingredient primarily responsible for the anti-diabetes effect. Dr. Mark A. Pereira, from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues addressed these uncertainties by analyzing data from 28,812 women enrolled in the Iowa Women’s Health Study, which ran from 1986 to 1997. All of the women were free from diabetes and heart disease when the study began.

The subjects were divided into groups based on the amount of coffee they drank: none, less than 1 cup, 1 to 3 cups, 4 to 5 cups, or 6 or more cups per day. During follow-up, 1,418 of the women were diagnosed with diabetes.

Women who drank the most coffee were 22 per cent less likely to develop diabetes than the group that drank no coffee, the report indicates. Further analyses showed that this association, which remained relatively stable by age and body weight groups, was largely accounted for by intake of decaffeinated coffee rather than regular coffee.

MNA/Reuters

Thousands of fake IDs, passports seized in Thailand

BANGKOK, 28 June — Thai police have arrested three major-league forgers and seized thousands of fake passports, passport pages, identification cards and visas for several countries.

Police Major Vinai Thongsong said the three suspects were nabbed at separate locations in Bangkok on Monday. They found thousands of finished and unfinished fake documents at their apartment in Din Daeng area.

The fake IDs were for more than 20 countries including South Korea, Singapore, Germany and the United States. Police also found about 1,500 visas for Australia, Malta, Moldova, the European Union (EU), Canada, Japan and South Africa.

The three were charged with falsifying state documents and forging both local and foreign passports and identity cards for use in human trafficking. They planned to sell the fake documents to organized-crime syndicates involved in human-trafficking, Police Major-General Vinai was quoted by Bangkok Post as saying Tuesday.

The suspects admitted that the gang charged about 4,000 baht (105 US dollars) for producing a fake passport. They added forgery had become easy with the help of high-tech digital equipment.

MNA/Reuters

New colour changing snake found in Borneo

GENEVA, 28 June — A new species of snake, with the ability to spontaneously change colour, has been discovered in one of the most biologically diverse forests on earth, the “Heart of Borneo,” the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) said on Tuesday.

The half-metre-long, poisonous snake was discovered in the wetlands and swamp forests around the Kapuas River in Betung Kerihun National Park, an area in the Indonesian part of Borneo, an island also shared by Malaysia and Brunei.

Biologists found that the snake could change its skin colour in different environments.

The ability to change colours is well-known in some reptiles such as the chameleon, but highly unusual and poorly understood in snakes, the Geneva-based environment conservation organization said.

“I put the reddish-brown snake in a dark bucket. When I retrieved it a few minutes later, it was almost entirely white,” said Dr. Mark A. Pereira, a reptile expert and WWF consultant.

Scientists speculate that changing colours helps the snake control temperature. Like chameleons, snakes are darker during the day to attract the sun’s warmth but turn to a creamy colour in total darkness.

Biologists named the snake “the Kapuas Mud Snake”, after the river that flows through the region.

In the last 10 years 361 new animal and plant species have been discovered on the island of Borneo.

The “Heart of Borneo” is currently being threatened, according to the WWF. — MNA/Xinhua

Three US Canadian mining companies merge into world’s biggest

OTTAWA, 28 June — US copper company Phelps Dodge Corp and two Canadian mining companies, Inco Ltd and Falconbridge Ltd have reached a three-way deal to merge into the world’s biggest mining company.

The companies said on Monday the union would create the world’s largest nickel producer and largest publicly traded copper producer. It would be the biggest takeover in Canadian corporate history. The new company will be named Phelps Dodge Inco Corp. Its corporate office and copper division will be headquartered in Phoenix, while Inco Nickel, the new company’s nickel division, will be based in Toronto.

The new Phelps Dodge Inco will have operations in more than 40 countries and will employ approximately 40,000 people. The new firm will be listed on the New York Stock Exchange and will apply for a listing on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

MNA/Xinhua
Mauresmo whitewashes 
Croatian qualifier 

LONDON, June 29 — French top seed Amelie Mauresmo marched through to the Wimbledon second round with a 6-0,6-0,6-0 whitewash of Croatian qualifier Ivana Abramovic on Wednesday. Mauresmo had lost her last two matches, at the French Open and at Eastbourne, but was completely untested by Abramovic on court two. The Croatian, ranked 192, was playing her first match in the main draw of a Grand Slam and her lack of experience showed in a total mismatch that lasted only 38 minutes. Mauresmo, a semifinalist on her last three Wimbledon appearances, will face a stiffer task in the second round against either in-form Dutchwoman Michaella Krajicek, who won the Den Bosch title last Saturday, or Australia’s Samantha Stosur.

Mauresmo, 30, is seeking her first Wimbledon title earlier this month, is seeking her first Wimbledon crown after suffering one final and two semifinal defeats. She joins compatriot Kim Clijsters in the third round after she was handed a walkover by sick Ukrainian Viktoriya Kutuzova. — MNA/Reuters

Roddick survives 
testing first round 

LONDON, June 29 — American Andy Roddick came through a tricky first round test at Wimbledon on Wednesday — six,7-6,4-7,6-6-2 against Serbian Janko Tipsarevic. The 2004 and 2005 runner-up struggled to impose his power-based game for much of the match against world number 101 Tipsarevic, who reached the quarterfinals at the Nottingham warm-up event last week. Roddick was 3-0 down in the third set tiebreak before his world record serve helped him recover to take it 8-6. Tipsarevic’s resolve was broken and the Serb subsided in the fourth set, delivering a double-fault on Roddick’s first match point. “My whole thing is survive and advance,” Roddick said. “I’m glad I served myself out of some big situations because I haven’t done that really this year so far. My serve the last couple of weeks has gotten a lot better.” The third seed will face German Florian Mayer in the second round. — MNA/Reuters

Schiavone’s hopes go South 

LONDON, June 29 — Italian 11th seed Francesca Schiavone suffered a big first round upset at Wimbledon when she lost 3-6,6-3,6-4 to British wild card Melanie South on Wednesday. South is ranked 305 and achieved the biggest victory of her career on her debut at the grasscourt Grand Slam. “I can’t believe it,” said the 20-year-old British number six who has career earnings of only 36,597 US dollars. “I’m so happy to have won, it’s obviously my best match ever. I just went out there and enjoyed it.” South faces either American Sheny Perry or German Kristina Barrois in round two. — MNA/Reuters

Vira Radisic overpowers of Thailand 

Paris, June 29 — Vira Radisic of Thailand, the highest profile in the women’s singles, faces either American Lisa Raymond or Russian Maria Sharapova in round two. — MNA/Reuters

Goal drought at 2006 World Cup 

Berlin, 29 June — The 2006 World Cup finals could finish with one of the lowest goal ratios on record, according to FIFA statistics. After 56 of 64 matches have been played, 132 goals have been scored for an average of 2.36 per game. The only other tournament which finished with a lower average was the 1990 finals in Italy where only 2.21 goals per game were recorded. At the same stage of the tournament four years ago in Japan and South Korea, 147 goals had been scored. In France in 1998, the figure was two higher at 149 and the finals closed with a record 171 goals. The highest goal average recorded was in 1954 in Switzerland when 140 goals were scored in 26 games, a staggering average by today’s standards of 5.38 per game. — MNA/Reuters

Blatter praises German World Cup as best ever 

Berlin, 29 June — FIFA president Sepp Blatter praised Germany’s World Cup as the best ever in a newspaper interview to appear on Thursday. “This is the best World Cup of all time,” Blatter told Berlin’s Tagesspiegel newspaper, according to an advance released on Wednesday. “Never before has an event been presented in such an emotional and global manner,” he added. “And from a sporting point of view we’re also getting the highest quality.”

Blatter said the enthusiasm for the Germany team was giving coach Juergen Klinsmann’s players a major lift. “The Germany team is being carried by the enthusiasm in the country,” he said. “I’m beginning to ask myself: ‘Who can stop these Germans?’

“Today, all the critics have to say ‘Chapeau Herr Klinsmann’. I say that too.” — MNA/Reuters

Venus devours 
Mattek in Wimbledon first round 

LONDON, 29 June — Defending champion Venus Williams made up for lost time with a 6-1 6-0 thrashing of fellow American Bethanie Mattek in the Wimbledon first round on Wednesday. The sixth seed, who is seeking her fourth singles crown at the grasscourt Grand Slam, rattled off 11 consecutive games on her way to an easy 51-minute win on Centre Court. Dressed in shorts and knee-length socks, debutant Mattek admits a liking for doughnuts and the Miami-based 21-year-old narrowly avoided the so-called “double bagel”. Mattek levelled for 1-1 in the first set but after that Williams’ heavy serve and punishing groundstrokes overpowered her in a match that had been delayed because of Monday’s rain. Williams, who is the only US seed in the women’s singles, plays either American Lisa Raymond or Russian qualifier Yaroslava Shvedova in round two. — MNA/Reuters

WORLD CUP Q/F Fixtures 

Friday, 30 June 2006

Germany v Argentina, 21:30 MST

Saturday, 1 July 2006

Italy v Ukraine, 01:30 MST

Blatter: Germany World Cup as best ever
DNA tests reveal China’s first foreign worker

Xi’an, 29 June — Chinese archaeologists have discovered the remains of what may prove to be the country’s first foreign worker—an early European who laboured on the mausoleum of China’s first emperor.

The discovery was made after DNA tests on human remains from one of the labourers’ tombs surrounding the mausoleum of Qinshihuang, in northwestern Shaanxi Province, which was built more than 2,200 years ago. Archaeologists found the foreign remains among 121 shattered human skeletons in a tomb about 500 metres from the famous museum housing the life-sized terracotta warriors and their horses and weapons.

The discovery means that contacts between the people in East Asia and those in what is now Central Asia actually began a century earlier than the previously supposed Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 220) period, said Duan Qingbo, head of the Qinshihuang Mausoleum Excavation Team under the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage. — MNA/Xinhua

Butt out, Bangladesh tells diplomats

DHAKA, June 29 — Bangladesh took a swipe at foreign diplomats on Tuesday for expressing concern about the country’s forthcoming elections, telling them it was none of their business.

Foreign diplomats recently met the leaders of the main opposition party, the Awami League, to discuss Bangladesh’s political situation and the 2007 election.

They also wanted to organize an international conference on best practice for the poll but the initiatives were foiled after objections by the government, Foreign Ministry officials said. “The elections, politics or the government system of Bangladesh are not the foreign diplomats’ business,” Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan told a meeting of diplomatic correspondents from local media.— MNA/Reuters

Julius Arile, a survivor of gun violence, speaks beside a sculpture in the shape of an AK-47 at the United Nations headquarters in New York, on 26 June, 2006. The petition gathers one million signatures and portraits of people from around the world calling for stricter controls on global arms trade.— INTERNET

WEATHER

Thursday, 29 June, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather have been partly cloudy in Kayah State, lower Sagain and Magway Divisions, rain have been isolated in Mandalay Division, scattered in Chin and Shan States, fairly widespread in Kachin and Rakhine States, upper Sagain and Bago Divisions, widespread in the remaining areas with locally heavy falls in Taninthisi Division and isolated heavy falls in Rakhine, Mon and Kayin States and upper Sagain Division. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Hpa-an (5.08) inches, Thandwe (4.73) inches, Thaton (4.57) inches, Myeik (3.93) inches, Hkamti (3.74) inches, Dawei (3.62) inches, Gwa (2.84) inches, Pyapon (2.56) inches and Thayawady (2.25) inches.

Maximum temperature on 28-6-2006 was 89°F. Minimum temperature on 29-6-2006 was 69°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 29-6-2006 was (97%). Total sunshine hours on 28-6-2006 was (2.0) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 29-6-2006 were (0.31) inch at Mingaladon, (0.44) inch at Kaba-Aye and (0.55) inch at Central Yangon. Total rainfall from 1-12-2006 were (25.67) inches at Mingaladon, (34.02) inches at Kaba-Aye and (37.48) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (10) mph from SouthWest at (12:35) hours MST on 28-6-2006.

Rain inference: Monosoon is moderate to strong in Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 30-6-2006: Rain will be isolated in Kayah State, Mandalay, Magway and lower Sagain Divisions, scattered in Chin and Shan States, fairly widespread in Bago and upper Sagain Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Rakhine and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Strong monsoon.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring areas for 30-6-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 30-6-2006: Some rain. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 30-6-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).
YANGON, 29 June — As the Union of Myanmar today is on the right track towards modernization and development, enjoying peace and stability, the government, the people and the Tatmadaw are striving together with united and cooperative strength to advance the cause of building a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic state in accord with the seven-step Road Map.

On the other hand, expatriates and fugitives attempting to grab power through short cut are opposing and turning their back on the government and the people, while taking refuge in the domain of some Western powers. Those powers are hosting and raising the expatriates and fugitives who have been pronounced as members of the unlawful organizations or terrorist groups to use them in launching political attacks against Myanmar.

A certain Western power has been raising and using the expatriates and fugitives with the cloak-and-dagger political aim — to install a puppet government under its control in Myanmar. At the same time, it is using the UN Security Council and the International Labour Organization as a means to attack the ruling government with slander and pressure against Myanmar.

The work of the Western power to hold meetings and give directives so that the power could be able to launch attacks on Myanmar from the international arena, and at the same time, the terrorists and expatriates would be able to cause unrest in the nation.

The government, the people and the Tatmadaw will jointly ward off and crush all internal and external destructive schemes in order to safeguard the sound foundations of peace, stability, development and advancement achieved through united efforts after the restoration of peace in today’s Myanmar.

The authorities concerned have urged the people to be cautious of and expose any terrorist trying to enter their community, business and trade under various disguises, and inform about them in time to the authorities. — MNA