Contestants will be able to take part in Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions with peace of mind as venues for the competitions have been made as secure as possible

Secretary-1 addresses second meeting of Leading Committee for Organizing 14th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

NAY PYI TAW, 26 Aug — The second meeting for holding the 14th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions was held at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Culture here this afternoon with an address by Patron of Leading Committee for Organizing the 14th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein. Also present on the occasion were Chairman of the Leading Committee Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Brig-Gen Wai Lwin, vice-chairmen and members of the Leading Committee, the auditor-general, deputy ministers, deputy auditor-general senior military officers, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, officials of the work committees and sub-committees, chairmen of panel of judges, musicians and others.

In his address, Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein said that the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions are held annually with the aim of handing down priceless cultural heritage to posterity, and the competitions will be held this year also.

Although venue of the competitions has been changed, there is no difficulty in holding the competitions as basic rules and regulations on the competitions remain the same.

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
For sustainable progress of domestic gems market

By degrees, the Myanmar Gems Enterprise is spreading its wings. In the past, the government manipulated the gem mining industry. But, now national entrepreneurs have access to such an industry in line with the Myanmar Gems Law and Bylaws.

The Ministry of Mines is helping the companies that have been granted permission to run jade and gem blocks, systematically sell their gems, jade and jewellery they have produced, and national entrepreneurs are taking part in the drive.

Myanmar has conducted its gems emporia since 1964. So far, the Myanmar Gems Emporium has entered its 67th year. Myanmar being rich in precious stones such as jade, ruby and sapphire, it is required to exert earnest efforts in concert for sustainable progress of the main gems market in Yangon.

Now, the world has witnessed many technical changes in the gems industry, and for that reason, innovative measures are to be taken extensively to manufacture a wide range of jewellery of captivating designs and the items of popular designs inclusive of artistic works, sculptures and mosaic paintings.

Therefore, national gems merchants on their part are to do their best to step up the production of finished gems at home and to gain a foothold in the global gems market by taking necessary steps to catch up with the popular designs of gems and jewellery that are in high demand in international gems markets.

In fact, domestic gems are national resources belonging to the State. So, the companies and entrepreneurs that are jointly operating the gems industry with the State for mutual benefits should systematically explore and trade precious stones and jewellery for long-term interests so as to ensure long-term improvement of the Myanmar gems industry.
China and Russia plan joint mission to Mars

BEIJING, 24 Aug—China and Russia plan to launch a joint mission to Mars in 2009 to scoop up rocks from the red planet and one of its moons, a Chinese scientist said on Wednesday.

Russia will launch the spacecraft, while China will provide the survey equipment to carry out the unmanned exploration, Ye Peijian, a senior scientist at the Chinese Academy of Space Technology, told a meeting in Beijing, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

The mission will be another step in China’s ambitious programme to jump to the forefront of space exploration.

Last month, Sun Laiyan, head of the China National Space Administration, said China would seek international cooperation as it prepares to explore the moon and beyond.

China expects to launch its first lunar probe next year, state media has said. It will spend a year orbiting the moon to collect images and data on the moon’s surface and environment.

In 2003, China became the third country—after the United States and Soviet Union—to launch a man into space aboard its own rocket. In October 2005, it sent two men into orbit, and another manned orbit is slated for 2007.

Nippon Oil to import crude oil from Russia

Tokyo, 24 Aug—Nippon Oil Corp plans to import crude oil from Russia’s Sakhalin Island in a bid to diversify its oil supply sources, the Yomiuri Shimbun newspaper said Wednesday.

Some 500,000 barrels of crude oil produced under the Sakhalin I project will be purchased by Nippon Oil. Besides, the company is also considering buying fuel from the Sakhalin I oil fields throughout the year, the newspaper said.

Nippon Oil plans to transport crude oil, which will be sent from the Sakhalin I oil fields to the Russian oil export terminal of DeKastri, in the Far Eastern Khabarovsk region, through a pipeline to its refineries in Muroran, Hokkaido, and other places using tankers, said the report.

About 90 per cent of Japan’s imported crude oil are from the Middle East, which usually takes some 20 days to transport. In contrast, oil transportation between Sakhalin and Hokkaido only requires about two days, it added.

Emergency Ministry workers collect the black box found amongst the wreckage of Russian Tupolev Tu-154 airplane of Pulkovo Airlines, 45 km (30 miles) north of the regional town of Donetsk, on 23 Aug, 2006.—XINHUA

US highway deaths increase

WASHINGTON, 24 Aug—Fuelled by a spike in motorcycle and pedestrian deaths, overall US highway deaths rose 1.4 per cent to 43,443 in 2005 on a year-on-year basis, a government agency said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles travelled was 1.47 last year, up from 1.45 in 2004, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said in a statement.

Motorcycle fatalities rose 13 per cent from 4,028 in 2004 to 4,553 in 2005 and that almost half of the people who died were not wearing a helmet.

The number of pedestrian fatalities increased to 4,881 in 2005 from 4,675 in 2004. NHTSA said it is working to reduce the number of motorcycle fatalities by encouraging motorists to get proper training, always wear helmets, and absolutely never drink and ride.

Despite the spike in motorcycle and pedestrian deaths, other fatality trends were improving.

The International Astronomical Union on 24 August, 2006, adopted a resolution on planet definition, according to which Pluto had been stripped of the planetary status. Pluto had been regarded by international astronomers as a planet along with other eight planets since its discovery in 1930.

“Snail” patients rise to 87 in Beijing

BEIJING, 24 Aug—The number of people confirmed to have fallen ill after eating raw or half-cooked snails contaminated with parasites at a Beijing restaurant has risen from 70 to 87, the Beijing Health Bureau reported on Wednesday.

They were diagnosed with a type of angiostrongyliasis, a disease caused by parasites that affects the brain and spinal cord, and can lead to meningitis, the bureau said.

In the past few days, the Tropical Diseases Department of the Beijing Friendship Hospital, which specializes in treating the disease, has been crowded with people who have headaches or stiff necks, including some people who had not even eaten raw or half-cooked snails or other river or seafood.

The hospital has opened three more clinics and extended consultations, with each doctor seeing nearly 100 people a day, but they still cannot meet the demand, a hospital spokesman said.

After two to three weeks’ treatment, most of the first group of patients the Friendship Hospital received are now in a stable condition, and some of them will be discharged from hospital this week, the spokesman said.

Because the disease may produce sequelae such as headaches and dementia, the hospital will follow up the medical treatments to ensure the patients’ complete recovery, he said.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese President Hu Jintao addresses the central foreign affairs meeting held on 21-23 Aug, 2006 in Beijing, capital of China.—XINHUA

Two girls hold cartoon bags in Yinchuan, capital of northwest China’s Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, on 23 Aug, 2006. Cartoon bags are now popular among the students in Yinchuan. —XINHUA

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MNA/Xinhua
ASEAN urges resumption of WTO Doha negotiations before year-end

KUALA LUMPUR, 24 Aug—The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on Wednesday called on members of the World Trade Organizations (WTO) to resume Doha negotiations before the end of this year.

AEM attaches great importance to the Doha negotiations in contributing towards strengthening the multilateral trading system. It is also critical to the continuing economic growth and development of our (ASEAN) member countries,” said minister of the 10-member association in a joint statement.

Malaysia is “ready to contribute and work closely” with WTO members to push forward the negotiation process and ensure a “meaningful and substantial outcome”, said the statement.

China returns 100 tons of nitrate-leaden milk powder to US

BEIJING, 24 Aug—Some 100 tons of US-made milk powder, found to contain excessive amounts of nitrite, had been returned to the United States, according to the Beijing Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau.

The milk powder was imported in three batches by a Chinese company from 10 July to 10 August. Beijing Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau refused to disclose either the name of the US manufacturer of the milk powder, or the name of the importing company, but said the Chinese company imported the milk powder as raw material for making chocolates. Samples from the three batches of milk powder were found to contain 2.8 mg, 4.4 miligrammes, and 2.7 miligrammes of nitrite for every kilogramme of milk powder. The state’s allowable limit of nitrite in milk powder is two miligrammes per kilogramme.

Nitrite is known to cause cancer if ingested over long period of time. The Bureau said the milk powder would be sent back to the US manufacturer, and that none of the defected milk powder had entered the Beijing market.

All imported milk powder will be spot checked, and only the milk powder that meets the state standard for food safety will be allowed to enter China.

China’s General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine warned local entry-exit inspection and quarantine bureaus to be on the lookout for other shipments of milk powder that may contain excessive nitrite.

Pakistan N-programme founder suffering from cancer

ISLAMABAD, 24 Aug—The founder of Pakistan’s nuclear programme Abdul Qadeer Khan is suffering from prostate cancer, a government spokesman said on Tuesday.

The cancer was detected during a routine medical test in early August and confirmed by a detailed examination at the Khan Research Laboratory hospital near Islamabad, the spokesman said.

“Since the state of health of AQ Khan is of public interest, the government of Pakistan would like to hold out an assurance that the best specialist medical care is being provided to AQ Khan in consultation with his family and personal doctors,” the spokesman said.

The public will be kept informed from time to time whenever necessary, the spokesman concluded in his statement.

Khan has been under detention at his Islamabad residence since February 2004. The government sacked him from his job as a top adviser in January 2004 after he was suspected to have transferred nuclear technology outside Pakistan.

Khan played the key role in developing Pakistan’s nuclear military capability, which culminated in successful tests in May 1998.

Floods claim 42 lives in Vietnam

HANOI, 24 Aug—Flooding and landslides caused by torrential rain in Vietnam have killed 42 local people and injured 20 others since mid-August, local newspaper Pioneer reported Wednesday.

Of the victims, 12 died in landslides in the two northern provinces of Yen Bai and Cao Bang last week.

The floods have also inundated over 9,300 houses, nearly 45,700 hectares of paddy rice, and 10,000 hectares of aquaculture ponds, causing a total property loss of hundreds of billions Vietnamese dong (dozens of millions US dollars).


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China calls for new approaches to resume M-E peace process

BEIJING, 24 Aug—A Chinese envoy said Tuesday that the parties concerned should launch new approaches to resume the Middle East peace process.

“My contacts with Arab officials have made me aware of a deep pessimism about the ongoing Lebanon-Israel and Palestine-Israel conflicts. Some officials believe  peace is dead. I think we must generate new ideas and approaches so that the process can be resumed”, Sun Bigan, China’s special envoy on Middle East issues, said here at a Press briefing.

The envoy stressed that the trend in favour of peace in the Middle East region will not be overtaken by anyone’s will no matter what difficulties or temporary failures may arise. “History has proved that the Middle East issue can never be settled by force or war”, Sun said.

As China’s special envoy on Middle East issues, Sun visited Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia from 6 to 16 August. His scheduled trip to Lebanon had to be cancelled because access to the country’s capital city Beirut was impossible.

“I hope to be able to visit Lebanon at an early date and contribute to the country’s reconstruction and recovery of stability”, Sun said.

According to Sun, UN Security Council Resolution 1701 is only the first step in the ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel, and the most important issue in the current situation is how to substantially and permanently implement the resolution.

EU tightens rules to block tainted US biotech rice

BRUSSELS, 24 Aug— The European Union has tightened requirements on US long grain rice imports to prove there are no signs of an unauthorized genetically modified organism (GMO), the European Commission said on Wednesday.

The decision follows the discovery by US authorities of trace amounts of the unauthorized GMO rice strain in long grain samples that were targeted for commercial use.

The rice, called LL Rice 601, is marketed by Germany’s Bayer AG to withstand a weed-killing pesticide and grown in the United States.

“The European Commission has today adopted a decision requiring imports of long grain rice from the USA to be certified as free of the unauthorized GMO LL Rice 601,” Commission spokesman Philip Tod told a news briefing.

With immediate effect, only shipments of US long grain rice tested by an accredited laboratory using a validated detection method will be able to enter EU markets. Shipments must be accompanied certificate assuring the absence of LLC 601.

The EU measure will be reviewed on Friday by a committee of EU-25 food safety experts, and again in six months’ time. At present, no GMO rice is authorized for import or sale within the 25-country European Union, which imported 300,000 tons of US rice last year, with 85 per cent being long grain.

Smoke rises from an oil pipeline after an accidental fire erupted near an oil refinery in the southern Iraqi city of Basra on 23 Aug, 2006. —INTERNET

Canadian soldier killed in Afghanistan

OTTAWA, 24 Aug— A Canadian soldier was killed and three others injured on Tuesday in a suicide attack in southern Afghanistan, local officials said. One civilian was also killed in the blast, which occurred when a suicide bomber ploughed his car into a Canadian military patrol in southern Afghanistan, officials said.

Twenty-seven Canadian soldiers have been killed since Canada deployed ground forces to the country in early 2002. —MNA/Xinhua

Robber nabbed after taking same flight as victim

BERLIN, 24 Aug— A German woman who was held up and robbed in her Berlin apartment earlier this month was astonished to see the thief waiting to board her flight from Antalya in Turkey to the German capital, police said on Tuesday. The 37-year-old woman telephoned her husband who alerted the authorities, police spokesman Joerg Kunzendorf said. When the flight arrived at Berlin’s Schoenefeld Airport late on Sunday, police arrested the 25-year-old man, who was wanted in connection with several other robberies. —MNA/Reuters

More than 30 killed in Indian road accidents

AHMEDABAD (India), 24 Aug—At least 32 people were killed in two road accidents in western and northern India on Wednesday, police said.

A truck with 19 people on board and loaded with salt skidded off the road and plunged into a flooded ditch on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, the main city of Gujarat State, killing 17 people.

In the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir, 15 people were killed and 24 injured when a bus skidded off a mountain road and fell into a gorge in Rajouri District. —MNA/Reuters

Officials from the department of medical sciences wear chicken outfits, while holding signs that read “eating cooked chicken is safe” in Bangkok on 23 Aug, 2006. Bird flu has spread rapidly since late 2003 from Asia to Europe, killing at least 148 people so far. In Thailand, the virus has killed 16 people including the latest one in early Aug since the H5N1 virus swept across parts of Asia in late 2003. —INTERNET

Singaporean and Indonesian navy soldiers arrest mock criminals during a joint naval exercise in Jakarta on 23 Aug, 2006. Indonesia is hosting the exercise, which will be conducted over 10 days along the Malacca Straits. —INTERNET

Fire near S Iraq’s Basra oil pipeline

BASRA (Iraq), 24 Aug— An anti-missile flare fired from a passing helicopter started a fire near an oil refinery outside the southern Iraqi city of Basra on Wednesday, an oil company source said.

Television pictures showed black smoke pouring from what looked like an oil pipeline. Industry officials in Basra were not immediately available for comment.

A British military spokesman said separately that the fire did not appear to be serious or a risk to oil production. He added that such incidents were common at this time of year, when temperatures in Iraq can soar above 50 degree Centigrade.

Basra is crucial to Iraq’s oil exports, which account for the vast majority of the country’s foreign earnings.

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Three teenage girls stabbed getting off Dorset bus

LONDON, 25 Aug — Armed police were hunting on Thursday for a man who stabbed three teenage girls after getting off a bus in the small seaside town of Bridport in Dorset.

The girls aged 14, 15 and 17 were attacked shortly before 6:00 pm on Wednesday evening, by a man described as in his early 20s with dark hair.

The girls were all rushed to Dorset County Hospital in nearby Dorchester suffering from serious injuries after the eldest managed to contact police by telephone. — MNA/Reuters

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Chinese scientists aim to produce “super animals”

BEIJING, 24 Aug—After great breakthroughs in developing “super rice”, hybrid high-yield rice strains, Chinese scientists now plan to produce “super animals” to increase stockbreeding output.

China’s animal husbandry output can double with the same input, provided the fruits of the country’s genome project are adopted in time, said Li Ning, top scientist on the genetic breeding and cloning of agricultural animals research project.

Li, from the state key laboratory of agricultural bio-technology under China’s University of Agriculture, said the research project is currently focusing on producing “super pigs” and “super chickens”.

The “super animal” project is being undertaken by the China Agriculture University, the Hydrobiology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), Huazhong Agricultural University, CAS and Kunming Zoology Institute and the Poultry Institute of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

Encephalitis claims seven lives in mid-western Nepal

KATHMANDU, 24 Aug—At least seven people have been killed by encephalitis as of Wednesday in Bheri Zonal Hospital (BZH) in mid-western Nepal, the hospital confirmed Thursday.

“At least seven encephalitis patients have been killed by Wednesday so far who were undergoing treatment in BZH, a government-run hospital, at Nepalgunj City of Banke District, some 600 kilometers west of Kathmandu,” BZH said in a Press statement.

So far 23 of 35 encephalitis patients undergoing treatment in the hospital have returned home after recovery, said the hospital.

The hospital has been receiving 2-3 encephalitis patients everyday since the first week of August, the statement added.

Kidnapped Fox journalists in Gaza appear on video

GAZA, 24 Aug—Two Fox journalists kidnapped in the Gaza Strip last week said they were in “fairly good health” and appealed for help to secure their freedom, a videotape released on Wednesday showed.

A previously unknown militant group, the “Holy Jihad Brigades”, earlier claimed responsibility for the kidnapping nine days ago in the Palestinian coastal strip and demanded the United States release “Muslim prisoners” within 72 hours.

It did not say what would happen if the demand was ignored. Fox News Channel correspondent Steve Centanni, a 60-year-old American, and New Zealand cameraman Olaf Wig, 36, were shown sitting on a blanket on a floor. They sat against a black backdrop with no markings. No militants could be seen.

“We’re alive and well, in fairly good health,” Centanni said, speaking in a clear and calm voice.

The video bore many hallmarks of tapes of captives issued by militants in Iraq, and the rhetoric of the group also mirrored the heavily religious language used by Iraqi guerrilla.

Centanni and Wig were abducted by masked gunmen in Gaza City on 14 August as they were working on a story.

Germany calls for EU unity on Lebanon peace force

ROME, 24 Aug—Germany wants a show of unity from the European Union over a UN force for Lebanon to help secure “lasting peace”, German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung said in an Italian newspaper interview published on Wednesday.

“Primarily the European Union must assume responsibility for a mission that can guarantee lasting peace,” Jung told La Repubblica ahead of diplomat-level meetings in Brussels on Wednesday to discuss the Lebanon force.

“This must go beyond the contribution promised by our Italian friends, ourselves and our Spanish and French colleagues,” he said. “It requires Europe to act in unity.

That is where our efforts are concentrated at the moment.”

Rome has promised up to 3,000 troops and to lead a force, authorized by the United Nations to total 15,000.

It is not clear how a European contingent of up to 9,000 will be made up.

EU foreign ministers will meet in Brussels on Friday to discuss the make-up of the force which will support a UN truce that halted Israel’s 34-day war with Hezbollah.

Germany, with historic reasons for not sending combat troops to the border with Israel, may contribute money, hardware, coastal patrols and specialists.

ENLIGHTENED, 26 August, 2006

ASEAN, S Korea hope to speed up FTA talks on services

KUALA LUMPUR, 24 Aug—The economic ministers from ASEAN and South of Korea expressed their desire here on Thursday to accelerate bilateral talks on trade in services and investment areas.

They expressed the willingness after economic ministers from the 10 ASEAN member countries held their fourth consultations with their South Korean counterpart Kim Hun-Chang here.

Progress has been made for the agreements on trade in services and investment and the ministers encouraged all parties to expedite the completion of these agreements, according to a joint statement released after the ASEAN-South Korea consultations.

The challenges in negotiating the two agreements could be overcoming with greater understanding of each other’s circumstances and through greater flexibility, the ministers said in the statement.

Nine of the 10 ASEAN member countries and South Korea signed an agreement on trade in goods in May this year in the Philippines under their agreement on comprehensive economic co-operation. Thailand did not sign the pact.

The economic ministers attending the fourth ASEAN-South Korea consultations hoped that Thailand and South Korea could solve the outstanding issues between them as soon as possible so that Thailand could join the agreement.

Creative mp3 players Apple Computer Inc announced on 23 August, 2006, it agrees to pay Singapore-listed company Creative Technology Ltd 100m USD to settle a dispute over patented technology on Apple’s iPod music player.
A plant for long-term income

Ko Ye (Agriculture)

A district-to-district road I found during my trip from Meiktila to Mahlaing was said to be in good condition, joining the Yangon-Mandalay highway near Mandalay International Airport. A local told me that the bypass branching out from the highway was used in travelling to Mandalay.

After a few minutes’ ride on the road, we saw physic nut plants higher than the height of an average man growing as a fence of a farm at the entrance to Legyi village, Mahlaing Township. The farm owner was a young man named Ko Aung Kyaw Moe who said, “I planted physic nuts as a fence in 2001. Once the ground under the plants were littered with fruits that fell from the plants as nobody knew their usefulness. Income from the sale of seeds and grafts exceeded K 100,000 during the previous year. I now protected them with thorny branches. As physic nut plants bear fruits twice a year, they are commercially profitable. You see these are saplings and I am ready to put five acres of land under physic nut plants. Mine are only five-year-old plants. U Htwe living at the other end of the village has a 26-year old physic nut tree.”

The plants at Ko Aung Kyaw Moe’s fence were about seven feet high bearing fruits some green and some yellow. They yield fruits in May in summer and November in the cold season. “The yield of each of my plants is one pyi (a small basket). As usually every fruit has three seeds. But sometimes only one out of 100 fruits has four seeds. Our family of nine is living on the earnings from plum trees, physic nut plants, milk produced from 12 cows and sesame and beans grown on a 22-acre plot.”

Afterwards we went to see the 26-year old physic nut tree. The tree with three feet in girth had only a few branches on the lower part of its stem as they had already been cut off for using as grafts. I have already read in a journal about another 26-year old physic nut plant grown by U Ba Htaw at a place near Kyaw village railway station in Pondaung Ponnya region. I have now seen with my own eyes a 26-year old physic nut tree at the village in Mahlaing Township. U Ba Htwe told us that there were two or three other physic nut trees of that age in the surrounding areas. Physic nut is a perennial plant yielding fruits for many years.

A friend of mine from Magway phoned me lately that there were 30 20-foot high physic nut trees with three feet in girth at an elephant camp five miles east of Lemakaw village six miles from Gangaw; and another 30 15-foot high physic nut trees with three feet in girth at U Tha Pe’s fence in Pyiwa village two miles from Gangaw. Thagyibin village near Yepya bridge in Pauk Township also has large physic nut trees. U Kyaw Myint of Taunggyi sent me a photo of physic nut trees with girths ranging from three to four feet at Luyoetaung village in Taunggyi Township in southern Shan State.

Normally a physic nut plant can exist up to 50 years and can bear a large number of fruits till it turns 30.

Because of the rising oil prices, the world at present is in the quest for alternative fuel. Myanmar, China, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and many other countries are finding alternative fuels including bio-diesel and building refineries.

All in all, establishment of commercial-scale physic nut plant farms will surely benefit the nation as well as the people as they are perennial plants bearing fruits for a long time.

(Translation: TMT)

Myanma Alin: 25-8-2006

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All in all, establishment of commercial-scale physic nut plant farms will surely benefit the nation as well as the people as they are perennial plants bearing fruits for a long time.
Contestants will be able to take part in...

The competitions are drawing near as they will be held in the second week of October, and officials of the leading committee, the work committee and sub-committees are to make sector-wise discussion and coordination on measures being taken for successful holding of the competitions.

Contestants will be able to take part in the 14th Myanma Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions with peace of mind as venues for the competitions have been made as secure as possible.

With the aim of holding the competitions on a grand scale, the seven objectives of the competitions have been laid down, and the panel of patrons led by the Prime Minister, the leading committee led by the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Brig-Gen Wai Lwin reported on arrangements for holding the competitions including selection of venues for the competitions and for categories of the competitions.

Afterwards, Vice Chairman-1 of the leading committee Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint reported on decoration of venues, prizes, arrangements for opening and closing ceremonies of the competitions and the dinner, erecting the competition posters, rules and regulations to be followed by judges and participants and accommodation. Vice Chairman-2 of the leading committee Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan reported on arrangements for fund raising for competitions, shooting of the documentary and covering news about the competitions. Chairman and officials of the sub-committees also reported on tasks to be carried out sector-wise.

The meeting concluded with remarks by Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Thein Sein and participants of the meeting viewed postcards, rules and pamphlets to be used for 14th Myanma Traditional Performing Arts Competitions.

Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Khin Aung Myint. — MNA

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan. — MNA

Indonesia Trade Fair to be held

YANGON, 25 Aug — Jointly organized by the Embassy of Indonesia and The Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry, a trade fair of Indonesian-made items will be held at UMFCCI Office Tower on Min Ye Kyaw Swa Road in Lanmadaw Township on 27 and 28 August.

Indonesian-made items ranging from garments, gems, foodstuff to cosmetics, construction appliances and household appliances will be displayed at the trade fair. In addition, domestic products will be on display. Admission is free.

MNA
Thai Deputy PM and Minister of Justice concludes visit

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Aug — Visiting Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of Thailand Police General Chidchhai Vanasatidya and party left here by air this morning.

The Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and party were seen off at Nay Pyi Taw Airport by Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Maung Oo, Thai Ambassador Mr Suphot Dhirakosol, departmental heads under the Ministry of Home Affairs and officials.

Yesterday evening, Minister for Home Affairs Maj-Gen Maung Oo hosted a dinner in honour of the Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice and party at Royal Kumudra Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. Also present on the occasion were Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Phone Swe, the Thai Ambassador, departmental heads and officials.

Livestock farms inspected in Shan State (North), Mandalay Division

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Aug — Chairman of Shan State (North) Peace and Development Council Commander of North-East Command Brig-Gen Aung Than Hlut and Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein inspected fish farms in Lashio Township on 20 August and fulfilled the requirements.

Next, the commander, the minister and party looked into the 2,000-acre plot to be put under rubber of Sein Wutt Hmuon Co of La Nge Arman Rubber Enterprise and 100-ton feedstuff factory of Kokang nationals cultural group in Lashio.

In the afternoon, the minister and party visited poultry farm under the Livestock, Feedstuff and Dairy Products Enterprise at Zeebingyi in Pyin Oo Lwin, Mandalay Division.

Workshop on forest research concludes

YANGON, 25 Aug — Organized by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Ministry of Forestry, workshop on forest research concluded yesterday at Forest Research Hall in Nay Pyi Taw.

The workshop was opened on 22 August with addresses by Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Than Aung, Resident Representative of FAO Mr Tang Zhengping and Director of Forest Research Department U Ohn Win.

A total of 13 research papers were read out at the 3-day workshop and officials of Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Forestry, rectors and researchers and responsible persons of NGOs participated in it.

Forest Department under Ministry of Forestry opened 6-week long Basic Computer Skill Course No. 2/2006 and Computer Maintenance Course 2/2006 on 22 August. A total of 60 employees are attending at two courses. — MNA

Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township gets self-reliant transformer

YANGON, 25 Aug — Ministry for Electric Power (2) Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint, accompanied by Chief Engineer U Tun Aye of Yangon City Electric Power Supply Board, inspected 33/11 kv 10 mva transformer installed at the sub-power station on a self-reliant basis in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township on 21 August morning.

Next, the minister attended the ceremony to hand over the self-reliant transformer from the Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Industrial Zone Management Committee to Yangon City Electric Power Supply Board.

First, the minister delivered an address.

Ministry of Labour honours outstanding students

NAY PYI TAW, 25 Aug — Ministry of Labour honoured offspring of employees of the ministry who passed the matriculation examination with distinctions on 25 August.

Minister for Science and Technology and for Labour U Thaung delivered an address at the ceremony to honour the outstanding students held in Nay Pyi Taw. Minister U Thaung, Deputy Minister for Labour Brig-Gen Win Sein, Deputy Minister for Science and Technology U Kyaw Soe and officials of the departments under the ministries awarded the distinction winners.

A total of 16 distinction winners including one six distinction winner and two five distinction winners were honoured at the ceremony. — MNA

19 members quit Dedaye Township NLD

YANGON, 25 Aug — A total of 19 member of Dedaye Township National League for Democracy including U Thaung Nyunt, U Aye Win, U Soe Myint Hlaing, U Hla Win, U Aung Marn, Daw Myaing, U Aung Ngwe, U Soe Myint, U Than Win and U Sein Thwin of Thegonlay Village resigned from the NLD of their own accord on 25 July.

They sent the letters of resignation to the NLD Headquarters and local authorities.

In their letters sent to Dedaye Township Multiparty Democracy General Election Sub-Commission they said that they no longer wished to support the NLD and had lost faith and trust in the party due to its misdeeds and they no longer placed reliance on the party and party leaders. That was why they resigned from the NLD of their own accord, they said. — MNA

Minister U Thaung presents a prize to an outstanding student. — MNA
SSA-S harming State and people by…

(from page 16)

(g) Nine oil tankers of the Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise on their way from Tachilek to Kengtung were ambushed with the use of heavy weapons and small arms by about 20 troops from Ywet Sit’s insurgent group at Taungthonlon in Tachilek Township at about 0720 hours on 22 May 2003. In the incident, the oil tanker with number plate H/5746 was thrown into the ravine along with driver Ohn Myint, and oil tanker with number plate H/5457 overturned. And three oil tankers with number plates H/4110, Q/9754 and Q/6321 were burnt down and driver Maung Win was killed. Oil tanker with number plate H/5750 ran into the wall of the mountain and driver U Kyaw San Hla was shot dead.

(h) At about 11:15 hours, on 28-12-2005 Yan Wai Han (leader of militia) of Monghan village, Mongton township, Shan State (South), died as he was shot three times by a small weapon fired by the SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group while visiting a friend of his, Chin Lee, to ask for a tarot.

(i) On 28-5-2006 Ma Thin Thin Khaing and Ma Chaw Su of Pyawbye township, Mandalay Division, while they were in Mankyung village in Hsipaw township to buy hair, were arrested by the SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group and killed about a mile to the southeast of the village. The culprits Aik Pan, Sein Hla, Aik Laik and Aik Lyan were nabbed but Saing Khoung managed to escape. Saing Khoung took gold earrings and rings and K 10,000 from the women and ordered Aik Pan to strike them to death with a stick. Then the dead bodies were dragged to a nearby stream and later buried.

3. In addition to committing such murders, the SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group also commits such destructive acts as planting mines, setting fire to the houses of village people and arresting them. Some incidents are as follows:-

(a) At about 1700 hours on 13-7-2002, Aung Myat, 39, sustained severe injuries in a mine blast planted by the SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group while driving a power tiller on the road near Mekin village, Mongton township, Shan State (South).

(b) On 26-3-2005 the SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group led by Chin Wi and Sai Chit set fire to 98 houses from Naungde and Maukmon village-tracts in Hopong township leaving 446 villagers homeless. A primary school and a middle school in Hintakhu village were also burnt down. A total of K 177230000 were lost.

(c) On 24-5-2005 at about 1130 hours, a 20-strong SSA-S Ywet Sit’s group entered Saikkhoung village in Kunhing township arresting about 10 villagers and taking them to Kyaingkham village. At about 2300 hours on 26-5-2005 also the group entered Wanlaw village in the same township and arrested a villager of each house.

(d) At 1600 hours on 30-5-2005, seven members of the SSA-S took six including Aik Mein, 19, of ward 5, prisoner. The six were doing farm work in the surrounding areas of Kengtawng township, Mongnai township, southern Shan State, when they were sized by the insurgents. Of the six, Sai Aung Mein, Sai Kyaw Lin and Aik Mein managed to escape from the insurgents on 14-6-2005. Local people have to enter the religious order as novices and monks as they have no wish to join the insurgents. Kengtawng had 67 novices and monks during the period from 8-6-2005 to 25-6-2005.

(e) About 20 SSA-S members led by Aik Phan took 40 people from some villages in Maukmai township in June 2005 to Lwetaishan HQ as new members. Of the 40, 14 including Maung Nyo of Mese village, Maukmai township, were found to be Pa-O nationals. As the insurgents did not trust Pa-Os they let them return home. The Pa-Os arrived back at their respective villages on 17-3-2006.

(f) Members of SSA-S entered Mongtwom village in Mongbat Township on 5-5-2006 and forcibly took away 16 Shan nationals as new members. Included in the 16 were a primary teacher of Mahonkan village and the secretary of Village-Tract Peace and Development Council.

(g) About 15 members of SSA-S seized and took away 17 locals of Mahonkan and Wanton villages in Mongbat Township at 2300 hours on 10-5-2006 including U Am Kham, 47.

(h) At 2100 hours on 8-7-2006, 15 SSA-S members led by 759 brigade commander Sai Ywe entered Wanpan village in Kunbing township, and captured 18 villagers including Sai Kan, 15, son of U Nar Lein, and took them away.

4. The above-mentioned incidents bear witness to the fact that Shan State Army (South)-SSA-S terrorist insurgent group led by Ywet Sit has been committing criminal acts many times from inside and outside the Union of Myanmar individually or in groups.

5. It is hereby declared that Shan State Army (South)-SSA-S terrorist insurgent group led by Ywet Sit and its members as terrorists.

By order

Maj-Gen Maung Oo
Minister
Ministry of Home Affairs
Two human traffickers jailed

YANGON, 25 Aug — In Myanmar society Myanmar women enjoy rights on equal terms with men. The Government is taking systematic measures for prevention of violence against women and trafficking in persons according to laws.

Muse District Court sentenced human trafficker Ma Yan Phaik Yi, 22, daughter of U Yan Kwe Yin of Ward 8, Tamoenyue, Kutkai Township, to 10 years’ imprisonment under Section 24 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law on 11 August, and Naw Hsain, 36, son of U Aik Leik of Aryan Village, Ward 1 of Nampheki Village-tract in Kutkai Township, to life imprisonment under Section 24 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Law on 14 August.

Ma Yan Phaik Yi persuaded Ma Aye Aye San, 24, daughter of U Yan Si Yin of Ward 8 in Tamoenyue, Kutkai Township, into marrying a Chinese man, giving her K 200,000 in advance out of K 960,000. The culprit while taking the girl with her was arrested by the border police force of the other country on 2 February 2006. The border police force handed over the culprit to Muse District Anti-Human Trafficking Squad that took action against her.

Culprit Naw Hsain enticed Ma Lu Aung, 16, daughter of Daw Ji Taung and Ma Hsain Nan (a) Ma Ywet Nan, 18, with the false promise of better work. The culprit sold the two girls in the other country. According to the complaint of Daw Ji Taung, mother of Ma Lu Aung, the culprit was arrested.

Members of the District Women’s Affairs Organization and the Anti-Human Trafficking Squad comforted human trafficking victim Ma Aye Aye San and handed over her to the parents.

In a separate incident, members of police forces from both countries are cooperating to be able to rescue Ma Lu Aung and Ma Hsain Nan (a) Ma Ywet Nan being trafficked. — MNA

Philippine Bulusan volcano emitting smoke

MANILA, 25 Aug — After over a month of calm, Bulusan volcano in Sorsogon Province, central Philippines emitted smoke on Thursday morning, state volcanologists said.

The smoke was seen rising from the volcano crater at about 11 AM local time on Thursday, according to a report by dZBB radio station. The Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said it was evaluating its data on the incident.

Phivolcs had lowered the warning status at Mount Bulusan to alert level 1, the lowest in its monitoring system, about a month ago.

Indonesia to exempt duty on Japanese auto parts

JAKARTA, 25 Aug — Indonesia plans to exempt duty on several automotive parts imported from Japan to support local industries as both countries are moving closer to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), an official said on Thursday.

The move was to reciprocate Japan’s support for the country in various sectors, an expert staff of the Trade Ministry said.

The policy will be implemented in stages with different periods for different groups, “ranging from 3.5 years to 10 years depending on the product, whether or not they are included in the sensitive list,” she was quoted by the Tempo online news service as saying.

The two governments have targeted to conclude the EPA talks at the end of the year, she added.

Japan already signed the EPA with the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. — MNA

Air NZ temporarily grounds “737s”

WELLINGTON, 25 Aug — A number of Air New Zealand domestic flights have been delayed on Thursday as Air New Zealand engineers inspect five aircraft.

An airline spokesman said the inspections are on between eight and nine years old. — MNA

Min Ko Naing, Htay Kywe hold talks with British envoy

YANGON, 25 Aug — Min Ko Naing and Htay Kywe of the group under the name of “88” students and the British ambassador held discussions at the residence of the first secretary of the British embassy here yesterday evening.

Ko Ko Gyi and Thet Zaw (Ba-ka-tha) of the same group arrived at Kalay in Sagaing Division on 19 of this month and stayed at the house of the late Dr Thein Win of the National League for Democracy, ex-representative-elect of Kalay Township constituency 2. The two met with Kale Township NLD chairman U Ka and writer Mya Hsint Chai on 19 and 20 August.

Together with children of the late Dr Thein Win, the two travelled to Thaungnyin village, Tiddhim Township, Chin State, by car the next day. But due to landslides, they went back to Kale. In the evening, they held discussions with U Ka and U Myint Thein, who returned to the legal fold after fleeing to the other country. U Myint Thein took part in the 1988 unrest.

On 22 August, Thet Zaw visited the house of U Tun Thein of NLD, while Ko Ko Gyi held talks with U Ka, U Nyunt Maung (ward/village NLD member), U Myint Thein, U Tun Thein, U Al Mya and U Do Htaw (Kale-1) on NLD activities at the house of the late Dr Thein Win from 9 am to 5.30 pm.

The following day, Ko Ko Gyi and Thet Zaw together with two daughters of the late Dr Thein Win and a female friend met with NLD members.

The five travelled from Kalewa to Monywa by Thwin Than Kyaw speed boat on 24 August. Thet Zaw had the itinerary to go to Yesagyo, Ko Ko Gyi and the other three went to Yangon.

Local people’s view on the activities of Ko Ko Gyi and group was that Ko Ko Gyi and Min Ko Naing and party had taken part in the 1988 unrest; that later they acted as political agents meeting with diplomats of some Western powers, expatriate insurgents, members of a certain local political party, and foreign media persons; that they came to the region with the scheme to destroy regional peace and stability.

Thailand, Laos discuss border issues

BANGKOK, 25 Aug — Thai Interior Minister Kongsak Wanthantra started a two-day visit to neighbouring Laos on Thursday for talks on a variety of border issues, the state-run Thai News Agency reported.

Kongsak and high-ranking ministerial officials arrived in Luang Prabang, the northern city of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), on Thursday to meet with governors of both Thai and Lao border provinces.

Kongsak said that the discussion would mainly focus on maintaining order along the border, anti-drug cooperation and problems in relation to individuals with dual citizenship.

MNA

People walk past a shopping centre which is on sale in Hong Kong, south China, on 23 August, 2006. — XINHUA

Jakarta - Indonesia plans to exempt duty on several automotive parts imported from Japan to support local industries as both countries are moving closer to sign the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), an official said on Thursday.

The move was to reciprocate Japan’s support for Indonesia’s human resources development and industrial development in Indonesia, said Halida Milijani, an expert staff of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA). The policy will be implemented in stages with different periods for different groups, “ranging from 3.5 years to 10 years depending on the products, whether or not they are included in the sensitive list”, she was quoted by the Tempo online news service as saying.

The two governments have targeted to conclude the EPA talks at the end of the year, she added.

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China says peaceful resolution is choice for Iran N-issue

BEIJING, 24 Aug—China believes that peaceful resolution through diplomatic talks is the best choice to solve the Iranian nuclear issue, spokesmen from China's Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday.

"China has always believed that seeking a peaceful resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue through diplomatic talks is the best choice (to solve the issue) and in the interests of all parties concerned," said the spokesperson who declined to be named for this report by journalists.

Earlier on Tuesday, top Iranian nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani handed over to foreign ambassadors in Tehran Iran's formal response to a package of proposals agreed on by six nations to solve the nuclear standoff without disclosing any details of the reply. "Iran now is ready for serious talks with the six world powers from this Wednesday over the package," Larijani said.

China is carefully studying the response of Iran, according to the Chinese Foreign Minister's spokesperson's office.

New York empowers mandatory background check in nightclubs

NEW YORK, 24 Aug—New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed the "Bouncer Bill" into law on Wednesday, empowering city authorities to shut down nightclubs that fail to perform background checks on their security personnel.

In addition to giving the city the power to shut down clubs that do not comply, the Department of Buildings will also make the security checks on their security personnel.

The move follows the recent murders of two young women, who were both killed after nights out drinking in Manhattan. A former bouncer at a bar in SoHo, Lower Manhattan, has been charged with one of the murders. The bouncer had a criminal record when he was hired by the bar.

Congress report faults US intelligence on Iran

WASHINGTON, 24 Aug—The US intelligence community is ill-prepared to assess Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities and its intentions for developing weapons of mass destruction, a congressional report said on Wednesday.

"Significant gaps in our knowledge and understanding of the various areas of concern about Iran," the House Intelligence Committee staff report questioned whether the United States could ever effectively engage in talks with Tehran on ways to diffuse tensions. Iran said on Tuesday that discussions could begin immediately on a package offered in June by the United States and its allies aimed at discouraging Iran's suspected nuclear weapons programme. Previous such calls for dialogue have been seen by the West as a stalling tactic.

The major powers made the offer after Iran last December said it had resumed efforts to enrich uranium in defiance of international community.

The congressional report, saying "there is a great deal about Iran that we do not know," warned that "policy makers will need high-quality intelligence to assess Iranian intentions to prepare for any new round of negotiations".

After the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which Washington said was aimed at rooting out weapons of mass destruction, huge gaps in America's intelligence-gathering capability were exposed. No such weapons were found and US troops are now bogged down in an extended conflict.

The House panel's report warned of similar inadequacies in the quality of US intelligence on Iraq's neighbour Iran.

"A special concern is major gaps in our knowledge of Iranian nuclear, biological, and chemical programmes," it said. —MNA/Reuters
Philippines forms task force to handle oil spill

MANILA, 24 Aug— Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on Tuesday formed a task force to head cleanup operations of the country’s worst oil spill in central Philippine island of Guimaras, Manila media reported.

The task force will be responsible in the retrieval of the sunken tanker and investigate the incident, and it will also recommend policy decisions to prevent similar incidents in the future, Arroyo was quoted by ANC TV as saying.

The task force, headed by the National Disaster Coordinating Council, said it might use bacteria to clean up the oil spill. It will also start identifying sea lanes to bring tankers away from beaches, according to the report.

An earlier report said that US and Japanese experts are expected to arrive on Wednesday to determine the best way to retrieve the remaining oil from the sunken vessel.

A tanker owned by Philippine fuel company Petron Corporation sank at the southern end of Guimaras Island, central Philippines on 11 August due to huge waves, letting out more than 350,000 litres of thick oil so far.

The spill is the worst to hit the Philippines but is tiny compared with the world’s biggest accident, the collision of the Atlantic Empress and another vessel in 1979 that leaked 287,000 tons into the sea off Tobago.

Indonesia rules out possibility of bird flu cluster

JAKARTA, 24 Aug— After conducting a probe on bird flu pandemic territory of Garut District in Indonesia’s West Java Province, health authorities did not find any bird flu cluster, Health Minister Siti Padijah Sufardi said here on Tuesday.

The authorities have found 17 bird flu cases in the three hamlets of the district recently, three of them are positively infected by avian influenza, two of the three are dead, according to Sufardi.

The probe “has already completed, there is no cluster, (the transmissions are) still from animal to human”, she told reporters at the State Palace here.

The minister said that a nine-year-old and a six-year-old girl from Cikeulet Village died on the bird flu recently but a 17-year-old man from the same area recovered.

US museum returns stolen painting to Mexico

MEXICO CITY, 24 Aug— A valuable religious painting that was ripped from a Mexican church wall by thieves and later sold to California’s San Diego Museum of Art is on its way back home, authorities said on Wednesday.

Five years ago, the museum bought the damaged painting called ‘Adam and Eve Cast Out of Paradise’ for 45,000 US dollars from a private art collector and restored it to its original condition before realizing it was stolen.

On Wednesday, museum officials handed over the painting, which is believed to have been used by missionaries to convert indigenous Indians to Christianity, to Mexican authorities who will ship the work of art to Mexico City.

Galaxy of celebrities expected at Toronto Film Festival

OTTAWA, 24 Aug— Heavyweights from Hollywood, European and Asian cinema are set to arrive at the Toronto International Film Festival next month as the annual event is strengthening its reputation as an international launch pad for films, organizers said Tuesday.

Festival chief executive, and director, Piers Handling, and co-director, Noah Cowan, on Tuesday announced an exhaustive list of celebrities, expected to attend the 31st edition of the event, which runs from 7-16 September, as well as a final slate of titles rounding out this year’s lineup.

The guest list tops 500 and runs from India’s Bollywood superstar, Amitabh Bachchan, to the Chinese silver screen goddess, Zhang Ziyi, as well as Hollywood’s Brad Pitt, France’s Daniel Auteuil, Canada’s Guy Maddin and Spain’s Pedro Almodovar.

Russell Crowe, Reese Witherspoon, Dustin Hoffman, Pierce Brosnan, Morgan Freeman, Christian Slater, Jennifer Lopez, Anthony Hopkins, Tom Hanks and Sharon Stone are also expected to show up at the festival.

The attention that has been lavished on the festival by the media worldwide and the film industry around the globe is also encouraging, according to Cowan.

S Korea’s exports expected to reach $318bn this year

SEOUL, 24 Aug— The South Korean Commerce Ministry said Wednesday that the country’s exports this year are expected to exceed 318 billion US dollars on the back of brisk sales of ships, autos and machinery.

In August, the exports are expected to surpass 200 billion US dollars, one month faster than last year, the ministry said.

During the first seven months of the year, South Korea’s exports have increased 14.1 per cent with daily exports averaging 11.25 million US dollars, the ministry said.—MNA/Xinhua

Losing weight is an obsession for many and not just for human beings, but also animals. Especially the monkeys of E’Mei Mountain in the southwest China Province of Sichuan. E’Mei Mountain monkeys have been busy keeping healthy recently and now many of them have regained nice slim figures with the help of experts. Monkeys stand on road signs. —Xinhua

A vet (L, not in picture) is to inject a grain-sized ID chip under the skin of a pet dog in Nanjing, east China’s Jiangsu Province on 21 Aug, 2006. The chip contains information as the breed, age, weight and the owner’s contact information.—Xinhua

A British pilot performs during the sixth stage of the “Red Bull Air Race World Series,” in front of the Parliament in the city centre of Budapest on 20 Aug, 2006.—Xinhua

A vet (L, not in picture) is to inject a grain-sized ID chip under the skin of a pet dog in Nanjing, east China’s Jiangsu Province on 21 Aug, 2006. The chip contains information as the breed, age, weight and the owner’s contact information.—Xinhua

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Indonesia prepares plans to channel mud flow

JAKARTA, 24 Aug— Indonesia has prepared contingency plans to divert hot mud flow pouring out from oil well in East Java Province if the current effort to stop the flow fails, Minister of Mines and Energy Pernomo Yudiyantoro said here Tuesday.

Indonesia has tried more than two months to plug the leak near the well, which is in the south of the second biggest city of Surabaya. So far over 8,000 people have been displaced. Among the plans, the mud will be diverted to the sea or rivers, said the minister.—MNA/Xinhua

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Chinese swimmers win gold, bronze in Rio under-17 World Cup

RIO DE JANEIRO, 25 Aug — China’s Wang Qun and Wang Jin won the gold and bronze medals respectively in the 50 metres breaststroke on Thursday in the first Under-17 Swimming World Cup held in Brazilian city Rio de Janeiro.

Wang Qun registered a time of 32.21 seconds, beating Russia’s Vitalia Simonova to second in 32.63 seconds and Wang Jin, who is rated the world’s best in 200 metres breaststroke, placed third in 32.65.

The International Swimming Federation-registered competition began on Monday and ends on Sunday in Rio’s Julio De Lamare Aquatic Park. It has attracted athletes from 61 countries and regions.

The Park will also host the swimming competition in the Pan-American Games in 2007. — MNA/Xinhua

Joaquin to make 25-million euro move to Valencia

MADRID, 25 Aug — Spanish winger Joaquin will sign for Valencia on a five-year deal from Real Betis for a reported fee of 25 million euros (32.06 million US dollars), Spanish media reported on Thursday.

The 25-year-old, who did not train with Betis on Thursday, is expected to travel to Valencia later in the day to undergo a medical. If the transfer goes through it will make him the second-most expensive Primera Liga signing of the close season behind Mali midfielder Mahamadou Diarra who joined Real Madrid from Olympique Lyon for 26 million euros last week.

Joaquin, who has won 42 caps for Spain and was part of the squad for the World Cup, graduated to the Betis first team from the reserves in 2000 when the club was in the Second Division and has been a leading figure ever since.

Kuznetsova down Dementieva to reach semifinals

NEW HAVEN (Connecticut), 25 Aug — Former US Open champion Svetlana Kuznetsova put out fellow Russian Elena Dementieva 6-3, 3-6, 6-2 on Thursday to reach the semifinals of the New Haven event.

In repeat of the 2004 US Open final, Kuznetsova rallied from a break down in the third set to clinch victory in one hour 54 minutes. The fifth seed next plays second seed Justine Henin-Hardenne of Belgium or Italian “lucky loser” Mara Santangelo.

The match contained 12 breaks of serve but also superb hitting from the baseline as the pair took turns to dominate. Third seed Dementieva looked the favourite when she broke in the first game of the deciding set before Kuznetsova moved up a gear.

Australian “lucky loser” Samantha Stosur beat Marion Bartoli of France 7-6, 6-0 to reach the last four.

Later on Thursday, top seed and world number one Amelie Mauresmo plays champion Lindsay Davenport for the right to meet Stosur.

In the men’s event, 10th seed Agustin Calleri of Argentina defeated Chilean Nicolas Massu, the 14th seed, 6-3, 3-6, 6-4 to set up a meeting with Belgian Xavier Malisse or Juan Ignacio Chela of Argentina. Swede Robin Soderling followed up his win over third seed Marcos Baghdatis of Cyprus with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Austrian Jurgen Melzer to reach his third semifinal of the year.

Chelsea drawn to play Barcelona again

MONACO, 25 Aug — Holders Barcelona will play Chelsea for the third successive season after being placed together in the same opening-round group when the draw for the Champions League was made on Thursday.

Chelsea knocked Bar-celona out 5-4 on aggregate at the first knockout round stage in 2004-05 but the Spanish giants exacted revenge by winning 3-2 on aggregate last season en route to winning the final against Arsenal in Paris in May.

The English champions’ previous encounters with their Spanish rivals were tense, controversial affairs.

Chelsea manager Jose Mourinho claimed his Barcelona counterpart Frank Rijkaard had vis-ited referee Anders Frisk’s dressing room at halftime of the first leg of the 2005 tie. Last season, Chelsea accused Barcelona’s teenage prodigy Lionel Messi of acting after a challenge by defender Asier del Horno, who was sent off for the offence.

“It’s friends reunited with Chelsea now that we are meeting them for a third year in a row,” said Mourinho.

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But Rijkaard had that brush fired off his head.

In a repeat of the 2004-05 semi-final of the year.

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China, S’pore agree to develop Suzhou Industrial Park

BEIJING, 25 Aug — China and Singapore agreed on Thursday to develop Suzhou Industrial Park as the world’s most competitive high-tech industrial base.

Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi and Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng co-chaired the eighth meeting of the joint steering committee of the Sino-Singaporean cooperative project launched in 1994. The committee set targets to be reached by 2010, including maintaining an economic growth rate of 20 per cent and doubling major economic indexes from those of last year.

The committee praised the progress in construction and development since the seventh meeting in May 2004, noting that annual economic growth had remained at 25 per cent.

The park had approved 981 foreign-invested projects, with a contractual investment of 25.8 million US dollars and actual investment of 11 billion dollars.

The park had sent 374 staffs for training in Singapore since May 2004.

MNA/Xinhu

Vietnam approves $1b steel plant construction

HANOI, 25 Aug — The Vietnamese Government has approved the implementation of a Taiwanese-invested project worth more than one billion US dollars on laminating steel in the central region, a local official told Xinhu Thursday.

Under the project invested by Tycoons Worldwide Group of Taiwan, a steel plant with an annual processing capacity of five million tons of steel billets will be built in the Dung Quat Economic Zone in central Quang Ngai Province in the 2006-2013 period, said Nguyen Trung, deputy head of the zone’s management board.

MNA/Xinhu

WEATHER

Friday, 25 August, 2006

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayah, Kayin States and lower Sagaing and Magway Divisions, rain have been scattered in Chin State, Mandalay and upper Sagaing Divisions and fairly widespread to widespread in the remaining areas with isolated heavy falls in Kachin State. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Putao (3.11) inches, Myeik (2.72) inches, Ye (2.35) inches, Kyauktaw (2.40) inches, Yangon (Kaba-Aye) (1.97) inches, Lashio (1.85) inches, An (1.81) inches and Pyinma (0.35) inch.

Maximum temperature on 24-8-2006 was 88°F. Minimum temperature on 25-8-2006 was 75°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 25-8-2006 was 92%. Total sunshine hours on 24-8-2006 was (3.7) hours approx.

Rainfalls on 25-8-2006 were (0.87) inch at Mingaladon, (1.97) inches at Kaba-Aye and (0.12) inch at Central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2006 were (75.63) inches at Mingaladon, (86.81) inches at Kaba-Aye and (94.06) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from Southwest at (5.80) hours MST on 25-8-2006.

Bay influence: Monsoon is moderate in the Andaman Sea and Southeast Bay and weak elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 26-8-2006: Rain will be isolated in Kayah State, Magway and lower Sagaing Divisions, scattered in Chin State, upper Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions, fairly widespread to widespread in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Moderate monsoon.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring areas for 26-8-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring areas for 26-8-2006: One or two rain. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring areas for 26-8-2006: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Weather outlook for first weekend of September 2006: During the coming weekend, isolated rain are likely in Nay Pyi Taw and Mandalay Divisions, rain will be widespread in Yangon Division.

“Flood Bulletin”

(issued at 12:00 hr MST on 25-8-2006)

According to the (106.30) hr MST observation today, the water level of Sittoung River at Toungoo and Madaik are (656) cm and (1123) cm respectively. They may remain above their respective danger levels (600) cm during the next (72) hours commencing noon today.

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Bridges, roads in Kachin State inspected

NAV PVI TAW, 25 Aug — Chairman of Kachin State Peace and Development Council Commander of Northern Command Maj-Gen Ohn Myint and Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun on 24 August morning left Myitkyina for Tanai along Myitkyina-Namatee-Tanai road and inspected repairs and maintenance tasks of the roads and bridges along the route.

On arrival at the site for construction of Dunban bridge, they heard reports by Deputy Superintendent Engineer U Soe That of Bridge Construction Special Group-15 on progress in construction of the bridge and future work. The minister stressed the need for carrying out more construction work as soon as the rainy season ends and attended to the needs.

Dunban bridge, being built across Dunban river at mile post 60/0 on Namatee-Tanai road, is 126 feet long and withstands 25 tons of loads. Next, Senior Engineer U Thein Tun of Road Construction Special Group-6 reported on construction work carried out along Namatee-Tanai road and future tasks.

The commander and the minister spoke of the need to cooperate with local authorities in the tasks for maintaining the roads and bridges. The minister also gave necessary instructions. Later, they inspected the site of Dunban bridge.

During his inspection tour of Doekwin

Farm in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay

Division on 21 August, 2006, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo

inspects cultivation of herbal orchids. Photo shows an official report to the minister on cultivation of the plants.

SSA-S harming State and people by shooting people, detonating bombs, torching houses, abducting villagers

SSA-S terrorist insurgent group led by Ywet Sit committing criminal acts individually or in groups

Government of the Union of Myanmar
Ministry of Home Affairs Declaration No (2/2006)
Nay Pyi Taw, 3rd Waxing of Tawthalin 1368 ME (25 August 2006)
SSA-S declared as terrorist group

1. At a time when the entire people are building a discipline-flourishing democratic nation in the Union of Myanmar, Ywet Sit’s terrorist insurgent group under the name of Shan State Army (South) SSA-S has been harming the State and the people by shooting innocent people to dead for no apparent reason, detonating bombs, torching houses in villages and abducting villagers with the intention of creating public bloodshed and panic.

2. Some of the atrocities the Ywet Sit’s SSA-S have committed are as follows:-

(a) On 13 June 1997, a group of Ywet Sit’s SSA-S stopped about 50 passengers buses plying between Taunggyi and Kengtung near an abandoned Palaung village in Kunhein Township, Shan State (South), and shot dead 26 Bamar passengers. Daw Htwe Tin (a) Daw Bu Tae and Daw Aye Aye Aung of Yankham Village (lower), Ward 1, Kengtung, who witnessed the incident reported on the case to the authorities concerned.

(b) In 1999, a 30-strong group led by Than Gyaung (a) Sao Kun Kyaw from SSA-S Ywet Sit group while collecting extortion money near Yingwe hill on Kyaukme-Nawngkhio Road abducted three policemen from a passenger bus, and beat them to dead near Konnyaung Village in Yaksawk Township.

(c) At about 0245 hours on 20 June 2000, about 10 members of SSA-S Ywet Sit group came to the house of U Thein Tan, 51, and wife nurse Daw Nang Shwe Ohn, 48, of Ward 1 in Mongkai, and shot and struck with swords the three family members. In the incident, three including U Lon Nya were killed and two sustained severe injuries and were rushed to Leikha hospital.

(d) At 0300 hours on 2 September 2001, four insurgents of SSA-S Ywet Sit group with small arms arrived at Wanphaing Village in Leikha Township, Shan State (South). Then, they robbed the house of U Lon Nya, 55, of the same village and took three watches, two ticals of gold and some money, and set fire to the house. Moreover, they hit all the five family members. In the incident, three including U Lon Nya were killed and two sustained severe injuries and were rushed to Leikha hospital.

(e) At about 2130 hours on 24 March 2003, five insurgents of Ywet Sit’s SSA-S arrived at Gu Kyaung (monastery) near Loikon Village in Kunhein, Shan State (South) and shot for no reason monk U Pandita, aged 66, Vasa 8, and novice U Teja, 26. In the incident, U Pandita was killed and U Teja sustained serious injuries to his right forearm and shoulder.

(f) While chairman U Kanna, 43, of Hwelah Village Peace and Development Council in Leikha Township, Shan State (South) and his wife were having their dinner in the shop at 2205 hours on 4 April 2003, an insurgent of Ywet Sit’s SSA-S arrived at the house and shot U Kanna three times and beheaded him left taking the head of U Kanna.

(See page 10)