**Four political objectives**
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order
- National reconciliation
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

**Four economic objectives**
- Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

**Four social objectives**
- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

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**Secretary-1 delivers address at coord meeting of Central Committee for Organizing the 60th Anniversary Independence Day 2008**

NAY PYI TAW, 17 Nov — The Central Committee for Organizing the 60th Anniversary Independence Day 2008 held a coordination meeting at the hall of the Government Office, here, this afternoon, with an address by Chairman of the Central Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thihla Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo.

Also present at the meeting were members of the Central Committee Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin, ministers, deputy ministers, senior military officers, directors-general of the SPDC Office and Government Office, departmental heads and subcommittee members.

In his address, the Secretary-1 said that the Central Committee for Organizing the 60th Anniversary Independence Day 2008 was formed for organizing the 60th Anniversary Independence Day which falls on 4 January 2008 in the entire nation with political essence. In addition, five objectives of the 60th Anniversary Independence Day have been laid down. They were: (a) All the national people to constantly join hands for safeguarding the perpetuation of independence and sovereignty of the State; (b) All the national people to collectively strive for non-disintegration of the Union and non-disintegration of national solidarity; (c) To ensure emergence of an enduring constitution in line with the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention that has been completed successfully; (d) All the national people to harmoniously make all-out efforts for building of a modern, developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation; and (e) All the national people to cooperate in realizing the State’s seven-step Road Map with Union Spirit, patriotic spirit and the spirit of sacrifice.

Moreover, he said that necessary subcommittees had also been formed to systematically organize the Independence Day celebrations in Nay Pyi Taw on a grand scale. In conclusion, the Secretary-1 invited suggestions from those present to hold educative talks, sports competitions, fanfares, essay and poem contests in States/Divisions and townships.

Director-General Col Thant Shin of the Government Office, Secretary of the Central Committee, reported on formation of subcommittees.

The commander and officials reported on matters related to holding Independence Day State Flag Hoisting Ceremony, the State Flag Saluting Ceremony, the compilation of the Independence Day Message of the State Peace and Development Council Chairman, the Independence Day reception and dinner, security, information, health and sports competitions.

After discussions on the reports, the Secretary-1 gave concluding remarks. MNA

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**Objectives of the 60th Anniversary Independence Day**

(a) All the national people to constantly join hands for safeguarding the perpetuation of independence and sovereignty of the State;

(b) All the national people to collectively strive for non-disintegration of the Union and non-disintegration of national solidarity;

(c) To ensure emergence of an enduring constitution in line with the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention that has been completed successfully;

(d) All the national people to harmoniously make all-out efforts for building of a modern, developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation;

(e) All the national people to cooperate in realizing the State’s seven-step Road Map with Union Spirit, patriotic spirit and the spirit of sacrifice.

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**Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.**
In pursuit of national goal in harmony

Myanmar’s national goal is to build a peaceful, modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation, and all who cherish the motherland trust and accept the goal.

The Union Solidarity and Development Association was formed to mobilize the participation of the entire people in the drive for building a new nation. For 14 years, members of the Association have done their bit in serving the interests of the nation and the people, applying their common opinions and views, and correct procedures.

After restoring stability of the State and community peace, the government got off to a good start to build infrastructures in the economic and social fields. With the intention of improving the living conditions of the people, it is now laying down and implementing projects in the agricultural, industrial, electricity, energy, communication, and transport sectors. Now, it has achieved success in these prudent projects.

In addition, it is building education and health infrastructures extensively, and the projects have started to yield fruitful results.

Association members put the public interest and development projects in the fore, thus winning trust and recognition of local people. The active participation of local people has helped bring the projects to fruition to a greater degree.

The government is now working hard to build a peaceful and discipline-flourishing democratic nation, as aspired by the people. Therefore, it is believed that all members will continue marching harmoniously towards the national goal, while joining hands with the people.

Second communal Kathina robes offering of Office of MOI, IPRD

NAY PYI TAW, 17 Nov—Under the patronage of Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and wife Daw Kyi Kyi Win, the second communal Kathina robes offering ceremony of the Ministry of Information and Public Relations Department was held at Yadana Theikdi Monastery, Mingala Ward, here at 9:30 am today.

Present on the occasion were departmental heads and deputy directors-general, guests, staff and their families.

First, the congregation received the Five Precepts from Yadana Theikdi Monastery Sayadaw Tipitaka Dighabhanaka Dighamkaya Kovidha Bhaddanta Pañhasami. Members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

Next, Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and wife Daw Kyi Kyi Win and officials offered Kathina robes and provisions to members of the Sangha. Vice-Chairman of the Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Than Lan Kyaungtik Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nanavamsa delivered a sermon and shared merits gained.

The minister and wife together with congregation presented ‘Soon’ to members of the Sangha.

MNA

Altogether 481 jade lots sold through tender

YANGON, 17 Nov — The sales of jade lots through tender of the Mid-year Gem Emporium 2007 took place at Myanmar Convention Centre on Mindhamma Road in Mayangon Township this morning. At 3 pm, Patron of Myanmar Gem Emporium Central Committee Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint cordially greeted foreign gem merchants who bought jade lots through tender. He then inspected private jewellery shops, jade mosaic shops and quality jade lots and gave instructions to officials.

Altogether 481 jade lots were sold through tender today. Gem merchants at the emporium were 2,093 from the People’s Republic of China, two from India, 15 from Singapore, 94 from Thailand, one from Britain, one from Italy, 14 from Japan, one from the Russian Federation, three from Canada, two from Australia, two from Germany, one from the USA, one from Switzerland, one from the Czech Republic, two from Indonesia and 1307 local gem merchants.

Jade lots will be sold through tender up to 23 November and through competitive bidding system up to 26 November.

At the Myanma Gems Mart on KabaAye Pagoda Road, gem lots will be sold through tender and competitive bidding system on 18 November.

Altogether 3,540 gem merchants at home and abroad attended the Mid-year Gem Emporium, and more merchants will arrive here to attend it.

MNA
Ahmadinejad says nuclear report shows Iran is right

TEHERAN, 16 Nov — Iran’s president said on Thursday a report by the UN atomic watchdog showed Iran had been telling the truth about its nuclear plans and was right to resist Western pressure, the official IRNA news agency reported.

A senior Iranian atomic official added that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) report meant further discussion of Iran’s atomic row in the UN Security Council would be illegal.

“We welcome this, that the International Atomic Energy Agency has found its role and with the publication of (IAEA chief Mohamed) ElBaradei’s report the world will see that the Iranian nation has been right and the resistance of our nation has been correct,” President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said.

Democratic Represen-tative Jim  

Democrats accuse Bush of “beating the drums for war” against Iran

WASHINGTON, 17 Nov — The US Congress Democrats vowed on Friday to constrain the White House’s power to wage any military attacks on Iran after President George W Bush “beat the drums for war” with the Middle Eastern country.

“It’s an open secret that Dick Cheney is agitating for a preemptive attack on Iran,” said Democratic congressman Peter DeFazio at a Capitol Hill press conference. “It would be disastrous to the United States, disastrous to the region, disastrous for our Armed Forces in Iraq.”

The remarks came after Bush reiterated his warning earlier Friday that Iran would be faced up to by the White House’s power to wage any military attacks if it refuses to suspend its nuclear programme.

Accusing Bush of “beating the drums for war” with Iran, Democratic Representative Jim McDermott said that Congress Democrats “under the Constitution have the right to declare war, to send troops into battle, not the president”.

At a joint press conference with visiting Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Bush said that pressure on Iran “must, and will, grow” if the country refuses to suspend its nuclear programme.

Small bombs explode in Thai south

BANGKOK, 16 Nov — Three of four explosives stuffed in beer cans were detonated by suspected insurgents simultaneously late Thursday in various locations in Thailand’s southernmost Narathiwat Province, while the fourth bomb failed to go off.

Police said all the bombs were planted at insurgent-related violence, which has claimed more than 2,500 lives since it resumed in early 2004. — MNA/Xinhua

Over 1100 people killed over cyclone in Bangladesh

DHAKA, 17 Nov — More than 1100 people were killed, many missing and thousands injured in Bangladesh after a powerful cyclone lashed the country’s south and southwestern regions on Thursday evening.

Private news agency UNB reported Friday among the 1100 people 500 are from southern Barguna District.

All the country was under darkness because the cyclone made the national grid fail to work. Some parts of the country have resumed electricity supply, but most parts of the country still have no electricity.

Chief Adviser of interim government Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed and Army chief General Moeen U Ahmed visited the worst hit coastal districts by helicopter and ordered local administration to gear up relief operation. — Xinhua

Plane hit parapet during French ground test, 10 hurt

TOULOUSE (France), 16 Nov — Ten people were hurt on Thursday when an Airbus 340-600 plane hit a parapet during an engine test on the ground at an airport in southern France, a spokesman for planemaker Airbus said. “There were nine people on board. Ten people were injured in the accident, one of them on the ground,” the Airbus spokesman said, adding three people had been seriously hurt but their lives were not in danger.

The plane had been destined for Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways. The cause of the accident at the airport near the city of Toulouse was unknown. — MNA/Reuters

Bus with 40 falls off cliff in Peruvian Amazonia

LIMA, 16 Nov — A bus with 40 passengers aboard fell of a 200 metres cliff on Thursday in the Peruvian Amazonia, local television reported.

The number of people killed, injured or survivors is yet unknown due to the difficult geographic conditions making it difficult to reach the disaster site.

The vehicle was passing through the Ucuchaca locality in the Toribio de Mendoza Province, in the San Martin department, some 850 kilometres north of the Peruvian capital, when the driver allegedly made a bad maneuver and the bus fell off the cliff. — MNA/Xinhua

Senegalese-born singer Akon (front R) pose for pictures with his fans at the launch of MTV Arabia in Dubai on 15 Nov, 2007. — Xinhua

The terrible tropical storm code-named SIDR with a speed of up to 240 kilometres per hour crossed through southern Barisal-Khalna belt from the Bay of Bengal early Friday, flattening thousands of houses, uprooting trees, snapping telephone and power lines.

All the country was under darkness because the destruction from remote and inaccessible islands that remained cut off till Friday evening.

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French, Russian PMs to hold bilateral summit

PARIS, 16 Nov— French Prime Minister Francois Fillon and his Russian counterpart Viktor Zoubkov are expected to hold bilateral discussions here on Thursday, official sources said Wednesday.

The meeting between the two prime ministers will discuss “issues related to energy, transportation and cooperation in the domains of aeronautics and space research,” the French Prime Minister’s Office announced in a statement.

The two leaders will also discuss other relevant issues including culture, education, youth affairs and defense.

The French delegation to the meeting is expected to notably include Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, Environment Minister Jean-Louis Borloo, Economy Minister Christine Lagarde, Agriculture Minister Michel Barnier, Education Minister Xavier Darcos and Higher Education and Research Minister Valerie Pecresse.

On the other hand, the Russian side will see the participation of several ministers as well as as heads of important federal agencies such as on atomic energy and space research.

Earthquake hits western Indonesia

JAKARTA, 16 Nov — An earthquake measuring 5.2 Richter Scale rocked western part of Indonesia on Thursday morning, no report of damage or casualties, the Meteorology and Geophysics Agency said.

The quake jolted at 05:32 Jakarta Time (2232 GMT) with epicenter at 79 kilometers southeast Sukabumi Town of West Java Province and at 50 kilometres in depth, an official of the agency said.

Ukraine step closer to WTO with Kyrgyzstan deal

KIEV, 16 Nov — Ukraine signed a trade agreement with ex-Soviet Kyrgyzstan on Wednesday to eliminate one of the final hurdles to membership of the World Trade Organization 14 years after launching negotiations.

“Today in Bishkek, a bilateral protocol was signed on mutual access to markets, vital for Ukraine gaining entry to the WTO,” a spokeswoman for Ukraine’s economy ministry said by telephone.

Ukrainian officials have been holding talks for several days in Bishkek, capital of Kyrgyzstan, which borders China.

Kyrgyzstan was the last country among WTO’s 151 members to clinch a bilateral trade deal with Ukraine. It had long withheld its signature pending resolution of what it said was a 27 million US dollars debt dating from Soviet times. Ukraine had refused to acknowledge the debt but the Cabinet agreed on Wednesday to extend Kyrgyzstan earthquake relief aid equal to the same sum.

Ukraine President Viktor Yushchenko promised to gain WTO membership within a year of taking office in 2005 after the pro-Western “Orange Revolution”, part of measures to move Ukraine closer to the West. Parliament passed several laws in recent months to comply with WTO rules but the entry date has been repeatedly put back.

US House passes war spending bill for troop withdrawal from Iraq

WASHINGTON, 16 Nov — The US House of Representatives passed a bill Wednesday to allocate 50 billion US dollars for its war in Iraq, but demanding President George W Bush to start troop withdrawals in 30 days and end combat by December 15, 2008.

“The fact is, we can no longer sustain the military deployment in Iraq,” said Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. “Staying there in the manner that we are there is no longer an option”.

The legislation, which was passed 218-203, was merely considered a symbolic protest at Bush’s war policies, as the White House has pledged to veto the bill.

In response, the White House said in a statement that the votes for the bill “put the interests of radical interest groups ahead of the needs of our military and their mission”.

The bill only authorized about a quarter of the 196 billion dollars that Bush has requested for war spending in Iraq and Afghanistan in the fiscal year 2008 starting 1 October.

The money included in the bill should be used to redeploy troops and “not to extend or prolong the war”, it added.

The Iraq war funding showdown will continue when the bill is passed to the Senate, since its Democratic majority leader Harry Reid has warned that Bush would not get any more money for the war this year if the bill is blocked by the Upper House, thus dragging the Pentagon deeper into its financial nightmare.

Widespread drink, drug abuse among pupils in England

LONDON, 16 Nov — About one in seven school children have tried illegal drugs while one in five regularly get drunk, a government survey revealed on Friday.

The online survey, TellUs2, found a significant level of drinking, smoking and drug taking among some of the 111,000 secondary school youngsters in England who took part. It discovered 48 per cent of all the children aged between 10 and 15 had had an alcoholic drink, and 19 per cent said they had been drunk at least once in the previous four weeks.

Sixteen percent of the 14 and 15 year olds who responded claimed to have drunk alcohol three or more times during the month.

The survey, carried out by Ofsted, also found that one in five of all children, 21 per cent, had smoked a cigarette, rising to 41 per cent for 14 to 15 year olds.

About 15 per cent of children aged between 12 and 15 said they had tried drugs, mostly cannabis. Three percent of all children surveyed said they had used other drugs such as cocaine, LSD, ecstasy, heroin, speed or magic mushrooms.

To many people’s surprise, two suns shined simultaneously on Wednesday afternoon in the sky of northeastern China’s city of Harbin, with the real sun brighter than the mock one.

INTERNET
Cambodia hopes to export about two million tons of rice in 2007 like in 2006, said Prime Minister Hun Sen here on Wednesday while addressing the graduation ceremony of a local school.

“We when celebrate the Water Festival from 23 to 25November, don’t forget to take care of our rice fields. Otherwise, the harvest can be affected,” he said.

Agriculture officials said that Cambodia can remain as a strong exporter of rice this year, but the precondition is that we do enough irrigation work to fend off drought, he added.

According to official statistics, Cambodia exported about two million tons of rice in 2006. Rice, one of the major agricultural products of the kingdom, accounts for 80 per cent of its annual rural product volume.—MNA/Xinhua

The Mekong River Commission (MRC) on Wednesday in Siem Reap Province expressed satisfaction with the cooperation of China in preserving the eco-system and upgrading the people’s lives along the river.

“We have been pleased to note that our Dialogue Partners are conscious of the needs of those downstream when considering new developments and working towards regional integration and prosperity,” said Nguyen Hong Toan, chairman of the MRC Joint Committee for 2007-2008, while addressing the 12th Dialogue Meeting of the MRC.

In the past year China has supplied the MRC with 24-hour water level and 12-hourly rainfall data for flood forecasting, while the MRC Secretariat has provided China with the monthly flow data gathered from the hydrological stations in Chiang Saen, Thailand and Stung Treng, Cambodia, said a Press release from the meeting.

There were also discussions on increasing the MRC’s level of cooperation in the areas of navigation and hydro-meteorological data gathering, it added.

The cooperation between the MRC and its Dialogue Partners like China has been strengthened year by year, said Nguyen Hong Toan in the release.

“In particular over the past two years we feel we have moved to a new phase of understanding for a practical framework of cooperation. Through such an approach we can all reap the benefits of sustainable water resources development in the Mekong River Basin,” he added.—MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia’s Lion Air to acquire airlines in six countries

JAKARTA, 16 Nov—Indonesia’s budget carrier pioneer Lion Air said on Wednesday it was preparing funds to acquire shares in airlines in six Asian countries as part of the company’s ambition to boost its global presence.

Lion Air will buy stakes in airlines in Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh and South Korea at the amount permitted under their respective laws.

“We have been collecting funds from internal and external sources. The budget ranges from 50 million US dollars to 100 million dollars per airline,” Lion Air spokesman Hasym Alhabsi told reporters here. He said the regional expansion was the consequence of the purchase of 120 brand new Boeing 737-900ERs for deliveries in the next five years.—MNA/Xinhua

S Korea, Vietnam agree to boost bilateral trade volume to $10b

SEOUL, 15 Nov—South Korea and Vietnam agreed Wednesday to enhance economic exchanges and raise their trade volume to 10 billion US dollars within five to seven years.

The agreement was made during a meeting between South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Nong Duc Manh, general secretary of the Vietnamese Communist Party, in Seoul.

“The two leaders noted a 10-fold increase in bilateral trade and a 60-fold surge in bilateral investment, and agreed to work together to raise two-way trade to 10 billion US dollars in five to seven years.

In particular, Roh asked for Hano’s support for South Korean firms seeking to enter Vietnam’s electricity, urban development and steel industries,” Roh’s spokesman Choe Ho-seon said.

Manh, who visited the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) and met with DPRK top leader Kim Jong-il in mid-October, also pledged that Vietnam will play an active role in enhancing inter-Korean relations and stability on the Korean Peninsula, the South Korean Presidential Office said. Roh expressed his appreciation for the Vietnamese Government’s “constructive role” in helping improve peace on the Korean Peninsula, Cheon told local media.

Manh arrived in Seoul earlier Wednesday for a three-day visit.

French sculptor Georges Saulterre admires his work, “Flying Colors,” which was unveiled at Shanghai Mart on 15 Nov, 2007.—INTERNET

Diamond goes for $16.21m to Guess Jeans founder

GENEVA, 15 Nov—A huge flawless white diamond was sold on Wednesday for nearly 18.2 million Swiss francs (16.21 million US dollars), to Guess Jeans founder Georgs Marciano who named it the “Chloe Diamond” after his daughter, Sotheby’s said.

A doctor teaches a lesson of diabetes to students in Huiwen Middle School in Chaohu, Anhui, Province, China on 14 Nov, 2007.—XINHUA

The brilliant-cut diamond, which weighs 84.37 carats, is the second most expensive stone ever sold at auction, eclipsed by the 100.10 carat “Star of the Season” diamond, which went for 16.5 million US dollars in May 1995, it said.

“It is just a whisker under the record,” David Bennett, chairman of jewellery at Sotheby’s Europe and Middle East division, told reporters after conducting the sale.

The unmounted stone is of the highest grade white colour D and purity, according to the auction house which had estimated it would bring in 15 to 20 million Swiss francs.

Lisa Hubbard, chairwoman of jewellery at Sotheby’s North and South America who took the winning bid by telephone in Geneva, said: “It was purchased by Georges Marciano, founder of Guess Jeans who lives in Beverly Hills (California).—MNA/Reuters
The Preliminary Session of the Annual General Meeting (2007) of the Union Solidarity and Development Association was held at the University of Veterinary Science on Yezin University Campus, here, on 12 November.

USDA Joint Secretary-General U Zaw Min presided over the preliminary session with members of the panel of chairmen CEC members U Soe Tha and U Tin Naing Thein.

Students of Nay Pyi Taw BEHS No 1, No 2 and No 3 sang the songs “Pyi Myanmar” and “Eternal Union.” Secretariat Member U Aung Thaung explained the tasks for the Annual General Meeting 2007.

After that, the Master of Ceremonies explained preliminary session discussions on the organizational and management sector, the education social and cultural sector, the economic sector, the sector for the affairs of new generation youth upholding the national policies of the State, the sector to organize the entire people to firmly support fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention for drafting the constitution and the sector to guard against the dangers posed by the internal and external destructive elements.

Also present at the meeting were CEC members and representatives of State and Division USDAs.

Group discussions of preliminary sessions were held at the designated places at University of Veterinary Science, here, on 12 November.

The Group No 1 held the preliminary discussion on organizational and management sectors at the language lab of the university. Joint Secretary-General U Zaw Min of the Union Solidarity and Development Association presided over the group discussion together with members of the panel of chairmen CEC members U Thein Aung, U Khin Maung Myint and Thura U Aung Ko. It was also attended by 80 representatives.

Joint Secretary-General U Zaw Min delivered an opening address. Representatives of State and Division USDAs participated in the discussions on organizational and administration sectors.

Six representative groups take part in discussions of preliminary sessions
Six representative groups take part...

(from page 6)

The Group-2 discussed the education, social and cultural sectors of preliminary session at the lecturer hall of the university. Member of the Secretariat of USDA U Tin Htut presided over the preliminary session together with CEC member U Maung Pa and U Than Htay.

After the Secretariat Member had delivered a speech, representatives from State and Division USDAs participated in the discussions on education, social and cultural sectors.

The discussion ended with concluding remarks by the Secretariat Member.

The preliminary session of discussion on economic sector was organized by the Group-3 at the university, presided over by Secretariat Member U Aung Thaung together with members of the panel of chairmen CEC members U Ohn Myint, U Maung Maung Thein and U Thura Myint. The discussions commenced with an address by the Secretariat Member. Next, representatives of State and Division USDAs took part in the discussions. The Group-4 held the discussion on the affairs of new generation youth, upholding the national policies of the State at the university, presided over by Secretariat Member U Thein Zaw together with members of the panel of chairmen CEC members.

The Group-5 also organized the discussion on the sector to organize the entire people to firmly support fundamental principles and detailed basic principles adopted by the National Convention for drafting new constitution. CEC member U Aung Min presided over the discussion together with CEC member U Nyan Tun Aung. Representatives of State and Division USDAs took part in the discussions. The Group-6 held the discussion on the sector to guard against the dangers posed by internal and external destructive elements at the university. It was presided over by Secretary-General U Htay Oo together with members of the panel of chairmen CEC members U Thein Nyunt and U Phone Swe. Representatives of State and Division USDAs participated in the discussion.
Secretary-1 honours outstanding

(from page 16)

In conclusion, the Secretary-1 said, the continuous emergence of human resources relies on how peacefully the students can pursue their education. All in all, students and their parents and the public are to cooperate in developing good conditions such as continuous emergence of human resources, a better education atmosphere and a better environment to pursue education peacefully.

The Secretary-1 presented prizes and certificates of honour to the first to the tenth positioned students in the science combination at the matriculation examination for 2006-07 academic year. Those prize winners are: six-distinction winner Ma Khin Myat Noe Tun of Dagon BEHS No 1 who stood first in the entire nation; six-distinction winner Ma Phyu Phyu Khin of Latha BEHS No 2, second; six-distinction winner Ma Wutyi Nanda Maung of Pathein BEHS No 6, third; six-distinction winners Maung Maung Khang of Pyay BEHS No 1, Ma Inzali Moe Moe Kyaw of Kamayut Institute of Education Practising High School and Ma Ei Yin Mon of Dagon BEHS No 1, fourth; six-distinction winner Maung Zaw Win Htet of Pazundaung BEHS No 4, fifth; six-distinction winner Ma Yati Maung Maung Myint of Bahan BEHS No 2, sixth; six-distinction winners Maung Kyi Hla Win of Kamayut BEHS No 2 and Maung Soe Myat Hein of Dagon BEHS No 1, seventh; six-distinction winner Maung Myat Htet of Kamayut Institute of Education Practising High School, eighth; six-distinction winner Ma Yin Nwe Aye of Mingaladon BEHS No 2, ninth; and six-distinction winners Ma Theinzi Shwe Sin of Chanayethazan BEHS No 16, Ma Nilar Aye Tun of Kamayut Institute of Education Practising High School, Ma Yi Mon Tun of Kamayut BEHS No 2 and Ma Pwint Yi Cho of Latha BEHS No 2, tenth.

The Secretary-1 also presented prizes and certificates of honour to the first to the tenth positioned students in the arts combination: three-distinction winners Maung Kyaw Zin Win of Myaungmya BEHS No 4 who stood first in the entire nation; three-distinction winner Maung Win Myint Thu of Thaunggyi BEHS of Kyonpyaw, second; three-distinction winner Maung Khun Aung Naing Oo of Myaungmya BEHS No 4, third, two-distinction winner Ma Myint Theingi Tun of Thandwe BEHS No 1, fourth; two-distinction winner Ma Wai Mon Soe of Kamayut BEHS of Magway Division fifth; two-distinction winner Maung Myint Win Aung of Ahlon of Monywa, sixth; three-distinction winner Ma Nwenti Huay of Kyonmange BEHS, seventh; three-distinction winner Ma Le Le Naing of Kinnmaw of Thandwe and two-distinction winner Maung Htet Myat Ko Ko of Ahtang BeHS of Kyonpyaw, eighth; two-distinction winner Ma Yu Yu Maw of Wazi BEHS, ninth; and two-distinction winner Maung Pyae Son of Yenatha BEHS, tenth.

Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe gave prizes to winners in the Sixth Mathematics Olympic Contest. Those winners are: Maung Htet Paing Oo of Dagon BEHS No 1 who stood first, Maung Kyaw Phyo Myint of Monywa BEHS No 3 second and Ma Thida Aye of Aungmyethazan BEHS No 8 third together with special prize winners Ma Ingyin Hmwe of Insein BEHS No 2, Maung Aung Myo Thu of Mayangon BEHS No 1, Ma Naw May Thaw Htoo Shein of Loikaw BEHS No 2, Maung Wai Phyo Maung of Mayangon BEHS No 5, Maung Saw Pyay Htoo of Bago BEHS No 1, Maung Steven Bwe Kyin Lyan of Falam BEHS No 1 and Ma Honey Tun of Myitkyina BEHS No 3.

Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein awarded prizes to the best pass rate schools of respective States and Divisions to schoolheads. These schools are: Mohnyin BEHS No 1, Loikaw BEHS No 1, Khayartwin BEHS of Hpa-an Township, Mindat BEHS No 1, YeU BEHS No 1, Myeik BEHS No 1, Toungoo BEHS No 1, Pyay BEHS No 1, Wazi BEHS of Pakokku, Chanayethazan BEHS No 6, Mawlamyine BEHS No 9, Sittway BEHS No 2, Kengtung BEHS No 2, Taunggyi BEHS No 4, Lashio BEHS No 3, Pathine BEHS No 2 and Mingaladon BEHS No 2.

Students of Nay Pyi Taw Pyinnmana BEHS Nos 1 and 2 sang the songs.

The ceremony, the Secretary-1 posed for documentary photo together with members of Myanmar Education Committee, schoolheads and students.

To catch up with the international standards, seminars and the national education promotion symposium on upgrading school curriculums and syllabuses have been held and plans are under way to prescribe new curriculums in 2008-2009.
Kachin State Special Region-1 NDAK Group
Announcement
Letter No Announcement 1/2007
Date: 17 November 2007

Kachin State Special Region-1 NDAK Group is an armed group that returned to the legal fold with a profound belief in the State’s political objective of National Reconsolidation on 15 December 1989.

We attended the National Convention from start to finish. We welcome the talks between Minister U Aung Kyi and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with a view to ensuring national reconsolidation. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi released her statement through Mr Gambari, the special adviser to the UN Secretary-General, on 8 November 2007. We do not believe it is proper for her to release such a statement at a time when talks on the future of the State are being held. Particularly, she should avoid releasing the statements that hamper the stability of the State.

Our NDAK Group does not accept the point that she was responsible for the affairs of the national races as said in her statement because we have no contact with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at all.

We support the emergence of a peaceful and prosperous democratic Union through the seven-step Road Map.

Kachin State Special Region-1 NDAK Group

Shwe Pyi Aye (SPA)
Former MTA Members Development Group
Announcement
Letter No. Ya Pa Ah/005
Date: 15 November 2007

Former MTA Members Development Group made peace with the Government on 5 January 1996. While carrying out regional development tasks, our group attended the National Convention. We participated in the discussions together with other delegates to be able to lay down fundamental principles and detailed basic principles.

We believe that the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles that emerged through the discussions based on the objective conditions of the nation are the most suitable ones for the entire people. We welcome the Commission for Drafting State Constitution formed on 18-10-2007 by the government for drafting a constitution based on the fundamental principles and detailed basic principles.

However, Mr Gambari recently issued a statement in Singapore as authorized by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The statement was issued out of the personal wish of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and we have nothing to do with it. Our organization is undertaking development of the State and our region with our own objectives and stand. As our party is not a follower of any party, we cannot accept the offer made in the statement.

Our organization has already discussed the affairs of national races at the National Convention. We hereby announce that we will steadfastly continue joining hands with the government in the realization of the seven-step Road Map.

Former MTA Members Development Group
(Shwe Pyi Aye)

U Lahsan Aung Wah-Peace Group
Announcement
Date: 5 November 2007

U Lahsan Aung Wah-Peace Group is an armed organization that returned to the legal fold on 24 February 1994 as it has trust in the government’s political objective of building national reconsolidation.

We view the meeting between Minister U Aung Kyi and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as a positive move. However, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi authorized Mr Gambari, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General, to issue a statement in Singapore on her behalf. So we see that her act has amounted to placing too much reliance on aliens as if ours was a weak nation.

Moreover, it is said that there are 12 political parties of national races that support the statement of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi issued via the UN special adviser on 10 and 13 November and the list of the supporters are mentioned in the statements. In reality, aside from Shan Kokang Democratic Party which was misused, the other 11 parties have already been abolished and they have neither party members nor executive committees. The statement, therefore, was merely a political trick and contrary to the law.

Our group hereby categorically announce that we will steadfastly continue participating in building a democratic state and performing national development work accepting the leadership of the government.

U Lahsan Aung Wah-Peace Group

Karenni National Democratic Party
Announcement
Letter 001/KNDP/2007/01
Dated: 15 November 2007

The Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP) Dragon Group broke away from Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) and returned to the legal fold on 5-11-1996. The KNDP attended the National Convention and dealt with matters on laying down fundamental principles and detailed basic principles for the emergence of an enduring constitution. The National Convention was attended by intellectuals, technocrats and well-experienced persons. Among them there were those who had witnessed the pre-independent period, Parliamentary Democracy period, Burma Socialist Party Programme period and the current period. Therefore, the delegates who knew thoroughly about Myanmar and the history of Myanmar held discussions on national interest with Union Spirit and laid down fundamental principles and detailed basic principles for writing the State constitution.

The government on 18-10-2007 formed the Commission for Drafting the State Constitution with national race legal experts, and we strongly support the commission.

Therefore, we hereby announce that we need not hold any discussion on the affairs of the national people with any person or organization and we will steadfastly continue striving together with the government for the success of the seven-step Road Map.

Karenni National Democratic Party (KNDP)
Karenni National Solidarity Organization (KNSO) returned to the legal fold on 9-11-2002 and has been carrying out tasks for regional development and community peace and tranquility. We attended the National Convention and held discussions together with other delegate groups for laying down fundamental principles and detailed basic principles to be included in the writing of the State constitution.

The discussions and decisions were based on national interest and national solidarity. Fundamental principles and detailed basic principles unanimously approved by all the NC delegates highlight the wishes of the entire national people. The Commission for Drafting the State Constitution comprising 54 members formed by the government on 18-10-2007 has been in a position to continue implementing the seven-step Road Map with added momentum.

All our efforts are being made for national reconciliation and the emergence of a discipline-flourishing democratic nation we hereby make public that we are not a follower of any party or organization.

We are an organization that is striving together with the government for bringing about peace and development of our region under own objectives and programmes.

Therefore, we hereby announce that we cannot accept any offer detrimental to the already-adopted fundamental principles and detailed basic principles, and we will steadfastly continue joining hands with the government for successful realization of the seven-step Road Map.

Karenni National Solidarity Organization (KNSO)
**US Democrats vote to curb Bush’s warrantless spying**

WASHINGTON, 16 Nov — Defying President George W Bush, the House of Representatives voted on Thursday to protect the privacy of Americans in his anti-terrorism surveillance programme and refused to shield phone companies from lawsuits.

The vote was a win for the Democratic-led House which has largely along party lines.

The bill now heads to the Senate for consideration. If it passes both chambers, the White House has threatened to veto the measure, warning it would hamper efforts to detect and thwart terrorism.

Democrats rejected Bush’s demand for retroactive immunity for telecommunications companies that may have taken part in the warrantless domestic surveillance programme begun after the 11 September, 2001 attacks on the United States.

Verizon and Sprint Nextel Corp of violating Americans’ privacy rights in helping the government’s warrantless domestic spying programme.

Democrats have long argued the warrantless wiretapping programme began after the 11 September, 2001 terrorist attacks.

Nearly 40 suits have been filed against AT&T

**NATO secures more forces, equipment for Afghanistan**

BRUSSELS, 16 Nov — NATO has made progress in generating more troops and equipment for Afghanistan, NATO spokesman James Appathurai said on Wednesday.

Several countries indicated their willingness at a force generation conference last week to deploy additional personnel and equipment in the south of Afghanistan, he said.

The offers included personnel for Operational Mentoring and Liaison Teams, trainers, embedded with Afghan National Army combat troops; reserve forces; helicopters and fixed wing aircraft; as well as force protection capability, said the spokesman.

The new offers could bring the number of countries involved in the volatile south of Afghanistan from 14 at present to 18 by the end of 2008, said the spokesman.

Northern Chile was battered on Thursday by two new earthquakes, the first a 6.2 Richter-scale quake and the second a stronger 6.8 Richter scale quake, Chile’s University Seismic Institute said.

**Polish soldiers charged over civilian deaths**

WARSAW, 16 Nov — A Polish Military Prosecutor’s Office told reporters on Wednesday that the soldiers claimed initially that they had been attacked by the Taleban in an 16 August skirmish. Injuries showed that there was no real danger to the soldiers, the prosecutor stressed.

He said the soldiers surrounded the village of Nangar Khel and opened fire, in which six civilians were killed. “Women and children were also victims of this shooting.”

According to earlier reports, on 16 August, two days after the first Polish soldier was killed in an ambush near the Afghan border with Pakistan, the Polish troops from the Wazi-Khwa base were attacked while on patrol by the Taleban, who then went into hiding among civilians.

The Polish soldiers fired mortars in the direction of the attackers, killing and wounding several civilians.

**China stalls new sanctions on Iran**

WASHINGTON, 16 Nov — China is stalling US efforts to get a third round of UN sanctions against Iran for refusing to give up sensitive nuclear work, a senior US official and diplomats said on Thursday.

The permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China — as well as Germany had planned to meet in London on November 19 to discuss a UN sanctions resolution against Iran but China balked at attending the meeting.

"Frankly, what we need now is for the Chinese to play a constructive role not only in working the schedule of the meeting but also to have constructive and effective conversations about the elements of the (UN) resolution," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said.

A report from the International Atomic Energy Agency released on Thursday said several questions remain about Iran’s nuclear work.

Both China and Russia, veto-wielding members of the UN Security Council, have reservations about imposing more sanctions against Teheran for its refusal to give up its uranium enrichment.

But the United States, France and Britain are pushing hard for a new UN sanctions resolution and Germany has indicated it also will support such a move.

A European diplomat said China had said its Foreign Minister wanted to “digest and analyze” information he picked up during recent talks with the Iranians before another meeting of world powers.

“We think it is simply stalling,” said the diplomat, who spoke on condition he not be named. "There seems to be a constant Chinese desire to procrastinate."

At a meeting in London on 2 November, the six world powers agreed to push ahead with a third sanctions resolution unless reports this month showed that Iran had been more transparent about its nuclear programme.

**Iran’s chief nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili addresses a news conference in Teheran, capital of Iran, on 15 Nov, 2007. Jalili said on Thursday that a Nuclear programme is “peaceful” and the pursuit of new sanctions against Iran would be “wrong”. — XINHUA**

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Pentagon warns to cut employees, contracts

WASHINGTON, 16 Nov — The Pentagon will have to develop plans to cut employees and cease contracts early next year if Congress cannot pass bill to fund the Iraq war within days, Defence Secretary Robert Gates said on Thursday.

The Pentagon has no enough money or the flexibility to move money around to cover expense on military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Gates told a news conference. He refused the perception that the Defence Department can still “continue funding our troops in the field for an indefinite period of time through accounting maneuvers and ‘shuffle money around the department’”. On the contrary, the department has to prepare to cease operations at Army bases by mid-February, and cut about 100,000 employees and an equal number of civilian contractors, Gates said. Marines will have to take the similar moves one month later, he added.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, both Democrats, said on Thursday that if a 50-billion-US-dollar spending bill with a timetable on troop withdrawal from Iraq is blocked, they will probably delay the issue to next year. Gates said that unlike what some congressmen believe, the Pentagon can only switch about 3.7 billion dollars, equal to just one week’s worth of war expenses. The House on Wednesday passed, 218-203, the bill that would pay for the wars but require that troops start to leave Iraq in 30 days to reach a goal of ending combat by mid-December 2008. The bill also demands the government to set interrogations standards that would make waterboarding illegal.

White House spokesman Dana Perino accused in a Wednesday statement that the bill “would only partially fund our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, but fully embolden our enemies”.

The bill is set to be voted before Sunday at the Senate, where Democrats still lack the 60 votes needed to avoid the president’s veto.

MNA/Xinhua

Russian woman gives birth to quintuplets in UK

LONDON, 17 Nov — A Russian woman has given birth to five healthy quintuplet girls at a British hospital after defying Russian doctors who suggested she abort some of the foetuses.

“They’re very well. All five,” Lawrence Impey, a doctor at John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford, told BBC radio on Thursday.

Giving birth to quintuplets can be dangerous and historically it has been rare that all five children survive.

The couple were advised in Russia to abort some of the foetuses, but decided to give birth in Britain instead, where their medical costs were said to be paid by a Russian charity.

The babies were born last Saturday, 14 weeks early.

Impey said the biggest of the babies was just under a kilogram in weight, but they were all now out of the most intensive form of care and could return to Russia in the next four to five months. — MNA/Reuters

British consumers unwittingly eating GMO food

LONDON, 16 Nov — British consumers are unwittingly eating food produced from genetically modified crops with nearly all milk, dairy products and pork produced from GMO-fed animals. Britain’s largest organic certification body said on Friday.

The Soil Association, which opposes GMO crops, said that a survey estimated about 60 per cent of maize and 30 per cent of soya fed to dairy cattle and pigs is genetically modified. “Biotechnology companies have clearly used imported animal feed as a Trojan Horse to introduce GM into the British food chain,” Soil Association director Patrick Holden said in a statement.

There has been significant opposition to GMO crops among British consumers.

The Soil Association, which certifies about 70 per cent of the organic food sold in Britain, said there was no requirement to label foods produced from GMO-fed animals so shoppers found it hard to avoid these products.

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Egyptian FM highlights importance of cooperation with China

CAIRO, 16 Nov — Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit expressed here Thursday that his country attaches great importance to the bilateral exchanges and cooperation with China in various fields.

Abul Gheit made the remarks during his meeting with new Chinese Ambassador to Egypt Wu Chunhua, who presented the copy of the credential to the Egyptian top diplomat.

While hailing the Egypt-China bilateral relations as the one with a long history and a solid foundation, Abul Gheit noted that Egypt would like to work together with China to promote the bilateral ties and make more active contributions to world peace and stability.

Wu, who arrived here on Tuesday to assume his post as the new Chinese ambassador, transferred the best regards from Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi to Abul Gheit.

China and Egypt, a country with a long history and a splendid culture, have been making good cooperation in various fields and international affairs, Wu said.

China is paying much attention to the development of the Sino-Egyptian friendship and cooperation, he said, promising to actively promote the Sino-Egyptian strategic cooperation.

China and Egypt officially established their diplomatic relations on May 30, 1956, which made Egypt the first Arab and African country to forge diplomatic ties with China. — MNA/Xinhua

Flood death toll rises to 45 in central Vietnam

HANOI, 16 Nov — Floods caused by torrential rain in Vietnam’s central region killed 45 local people, left seven missing, and injured 61 others on November 10-15, local newspaper Youth reported on Friday.

Quang Nam Province suffered the biggest human loss with 20 fatalities, Quang Ngai province, 10, Binh Dinh Province, six, and Thua Thien Hue Province, four. The floods also inundated some 376,000 houses, damaged over 2,500 hectares of paddy rice, and isolated some areas in the region, causing total property losses of trillions of Vietnamese dong (VND) (hundreds of millions US dollars).

The region may face a new wave of flooding, after a spell of torrential rain is forecast to occur there on 16-25 November, according to the National Hydro Meteorology Forecast Centre.

Natural disasters including typhoons and hurricanes took the lives of 339 people, left 274 persons missing, and injured 2,065 others in 2007.

The estimated losses totalled 18.6 trillion Vietnamese dong (nearly 1.2 billion US dollars) in the year. — MNA/Xinhua

Two Zeppelin tickets make $170,000 in charity sale

LONDON, 16 Nov — A man from Glasgow, Scotland, paid 83,000 pounds (170,000 US dollars) for a pair of tickets to a one-off Led Zeppelin reunion gig in London on December 10, according to the BBC which organized the charity auction.

Kenneth Donnell was the winner of Thursday’s sale held by radio host Terry Wogan for the Children in Need charity.

Over the last four days, the auction has raised 894,000 pounds, the BBC added.

Several million fans tried to buy tickets to the Led Zeppelin reunion gig at London’s 02 arena, which had to be postponed after guitarist Jimmy Page broke a finger.

The tickets went on sale at 125 pounds (256 US dollars) each, although they are trading at several times that on the online auction site www.ebay.co.uk.

In addition to watching the concert, Donnell will also be allowed to watch Led Zeppelin rehearse the day before and take home a signed memento from the 1970s rockers.

On Wednesday, Martin Ainscough from Wigan in northern England paid 250,000 pounds to have singer Aled Jones and pop star Katie Melua perform a private gig in Manchester.

The Children in Need charity initiative culminates with a fundraising television show on Friday. — MNA/Reuters
Israel coach hopes to show up Russian striker's arrogance

Tel. Aviv, 17 Nov — Israel coach Dror Kashtan said on Friday he hoped Russian striker Alexander Kerzhakov would be shown up for his "arrogant" claim that his side would win even if Israel fielded 13 players in their Euro 2008 qualifier.

Kashtan, who hosts Russia on Saturday in Group E, cannot qualify for next year's finals but the visitors know victory for them in Tel Aviv would all but secure their place.

Kerzhakov was quoted by newspapers earlier this week as saying: "We cannot fail to win even if we face 13 players."

Kashtan retorted: "We checked again with UEFA if we can field 13 players but I can say clearly here that we will take the field with 11 players."

"And I hope that the player who displayed the arrogance will be shown up for his arrogance," he told reporters.

Russia coach Guus Hiddink took a more cautious stance than his striker, saying he expected a tough game because of Israel's good home record. Croatia's 4-3 win in Israel a year ago ended a seven-year unbeaten run for the home side in Tel Aviv.

"We do expect a difficult game because the record of Israel at home is rather strong," he said.

Victory for Russia would practically seal their place in the finals with a last group game against bottom-side Andorra still to come. It would also almost certainly end the hopes of England, who host group leaders Andorra still to come. It would also almost certainly end the hopes of England, who host group leaders Andorra still to come.

"A 2-2 draw in Ukraine wouldn't be a bad result," Domenech told reporters after resting several first-choice players on Friday including forwards Thierry Henry and Franck Ribery. —MNA/Reuters

Federer heads Red Group at Masters Cup

Shanghai, 17Nov — World number one Roger Federer finished first at the Red Group of the tennis Masters Cup after beating American Andy Roddick for the 15th time 6-4, 6-2 in the last round-robin match here on Friday.

The Swiss mogul, who was not in his best this week, will face Gold Group runner-up Rafael Nadal in the last four, while Roddick will meet in-form Gold Group winner David Ferrer.

The two, who had been guaranteed to reach the semifinals after Russian Nikolay Davydenko beat Chilean Fernando Gonzalez in an earlier match, did not show their best, completing the match in just 61 minutes.

Federer has ranked No.1 every week since first taking over on February 2, 2004, and has ranked No.1 for 198 weeks as of November 12, breaking the record of Connors (160) for most consecutive weeks at No.1 this season.

Russia will add another three Grand Slams this season, taking his total to 12, among seven titles this year. However, Federer seemed unusually vulnerable recently, suffering three defeats in the past four weeks, his worst run since 2003. — MNA/Xinhua

Lehmann insists to stay in Arsenal until season end

Berlin, 17Nov — Germany's goalkeeper Jens Lehmann said on Friday he will stay with English Premier League side Arsenal until the end of this season.

"I want to stay with Arsenal until the end of the season," Lehmann told on Friday.

"I cannot just leave like that before the season ends," he added.

Lehmann will win his 50th cap against the Cypriots in a meaningless qualifier with Germany already through to next summer's European Championships and Cyprus unable to advance further.

The 38-year-old admitted he has received several offers from other clubs, without giving precise details. — MNA/Xinhua

Adriano heads to Brazilian camp to regain fitness

Milan, 17Nov — Inter Milan striker Adriano will attend a training camp in his native Brazil in a bid to regain full mental and physical fitness, the Italian champions said on Friday.

"I cannot just leave like that before the season ends," he added.

Lehmann will win his 50th cap against the Cypriots in a meaningless qualifier with Germany already through to next summer's European Championships and Cyprus unable to advance further.

The 38-year-old admitted he has received several offers from other clubs, without giving precise details. — MNA/Xinhua

England lose Owen in friendly win over Austria

Vienna, 17Nov — England secured a straightforward 1-0 friendly win over Euro 2008 co-hosts Austria on Friday but suffered the more significant loss of Michael Owen to injury.

Already without Wayne Rooney for Wednesday's potentially decisive Euro 2008 Group E qualifier against Croatia, England saw striker Owen leave the pitch in Vienna after 34 minutes.

Manager Steve McClaren later confirmed that Owen had been ruled out of the match at Wembley.

"He won't be fit for Wednesday," McClaren told a post-match news conference. "It was a strange one, it was his standing foot. He's pulled his thigh and unfortunately he's out.

"That's football but we do seem to be plagued with injuries at the present moment and for what I believe will be our biggest game for quite some while we're going in without two centre halves and two centre forwards who we would pick."

England's problems at the back revolve around injured captain John Terry and the suspended Rio Ferdinand.

"It's disappointing but I believe and hope that Wednesday will be important," McClaren added, "and I believe there's enough in that dressing room and the squad has enough spirit that we will do it".

Owen indicated to the England bench that he wanted to come off after suffering the injury following a shot at goal. — MNA/Reuters
Belarus blasts US sanction, summons ambassador

Minsk, 16 Nov — Belarus summoned the US ambassador on Thursday to issue a formal protest against financial sanctions imposed on oil producer Belneftekhim.

The Bush Administration, which has dubbed ex-Soviet Belarus “the last dictatorship in Europe”, has issued a long series of punitive measures against Belarus, including an entry ban on President Alexander Lukashenko.

On Tuesday, Washington prohibited Americans from doing business with the refining and petrochemical firm and froze any assets it has under US jurisdiction.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Andrei Popov said US ambassador Karen Stewart had been presented with a note of protest.

“The note says the US Government has violated a trade agreement signed by the United States and Belarus,” Popov told a news conference.

“The Belarusian side demands that the United States return assets and property to Belneftekhim, their lawful owner.”

Belarus said on Wednesday it was considering “appropriate” retaliatory moves against the United States in response to the sanctions, without elaborating.

Popov offered no further details. The United States has little investment in Belarus and it is not clear what form retaliation might take.

MNA/Xinhua

Artillery shell explosion kills 7 in Vietnam

HANOI, 16 Nov — Seven people from Vietnam’s southern Binh Duong Province have been killed after an artillery shell exploded, local newspaper Youth reported on Friday.

The explosion occurred on Thursday in Binh Duong District when a 42-year-old scrap collector named Pham Anh Tuan was sawing the shell for explosive.

Three people died instantly, and four others on the way to hospital.

Besides the 42-year-old man, six other victims were young: in the age bracket of 5-18. All the seven were each other’s relatives.

According to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund of the United States, during the Vietnam War in 1965-1975, the US Armed Forces deployed more than 15 million tons of bombs, mines, artillery shells and other ordnance in Vietnam, in which 10 percent did not detonate as designed.

Local scrap collectors often saw unexploded ordnance (UXO) for metal and explosive, while small children play ammunitions by breaking them, resulting in hundreds of deaths and injuries annually.

There are still over 30,000,000 tons of UXO in Vietnam, according to estimates. — MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Saturday, 17 November, 2007
Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Kachin, Chin States, scattered in Rakhine State and upper Sagaing Division, isolated in Shan State, lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Tanintharyi Divisions and weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Night tempera-tures were (3°C) below November average temperatures in Magway Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above November average temperatures in Kachin, Shan, Mon, Rakhine States and Mandalay Division and about November average temperatures in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Puato and Maungdaw (1.30) inches each, Maichampaw (1.18) inches, Sittway (0.94) inch and Hkamti (0.91) inch. The significant night temperature was Haka (4.0°C).

Maximum temperature on 16-11-2007 was 93°F. Minimum temperature on 17-11-2007 was 71°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hours MST on 17-11-2007 was 77%. Total sunshine hours on 16-11-2007 was (5.5) hours approx.

Rainfall on 17-11-2007 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2007 was (136.46) inches at Mingaladon, (140.83) inches at Kaba-Aye and (144.29) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) m/s from West at (18:30) hours MST on 16-11-2007.

Bay influence: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea Southeast Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 18-11-2007: Rain or thundershowers are likely isolated in Kachin State, upper Sagaing and Tanintharyi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Southern Myanmar areas.


Secretary-1 honours outstanding students

NAY PYI TAW, 17 Nov—The students who stood first to tenth in science combination and in arts combination in the 2006-2007 academic year matriculation examination and prize-winning students in the Maths Olympiad contests were honoured at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Education here this afternoon, attended by Chairman of the Myanmar Education Committee Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo.

Also present on the occasion were ministers, the deputy ministers, MED members, heads of departments, officials of social organizations, the principals of the prize-winning schools, outstanding students, and teachers and students of the schools in Nay Pyi Taw.

MaPoEiZaw and Ma May Lwin Zaw of Nay Pyi Taw Basic Education High School No 3 acted as MCS.

In his address, the Secretary-1 said the government has laid down educational objectives and is making efforts for turning out brilliant human resources that can shape the better future of the State. It is heartening to note that turning out outstanding students of high qualification is the success of the endeavours of the entire people.

He said every student is trying to become top ten ones in the matriculation examination. This is what they hope in their life. Winning such prestige is a milestone of success of brilliant students in their life.

He pointed out that the success is not a destination of life. Continuing, he said, the government is nurturing the students to become new generation youths with patriotism and high efficiency in arts and science.

In order to realize the lofty aims, the government laid down the education promotion programmes and is creating learning opportunities. At the same time it is building educational infrastructures and better educational environment and providing necessary assistance.

He said respective universities have been opened to produce intellectuals and intelligentsia needed in the country.

Curriculum and syllabus for basic education sector were upgraded and modern teaching aids were provided in accord with the guidance of the Head of State, he said.

In order to improve the teaching quality of students the teaching quality of Math Olympic Contest come from all corners of the country.

Schools of states and divisions that have had highest pass rate are no longer the ones from major cities but from various regions of country.