NAY PYI TAW, 27 April—Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of felicitations to His Excellency Mr. Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa, on the occasion of the Freedom Day of the Republic of South Africa which falls on 27 April 2010.

Senior General Than Shwe felicitates President of South Africa

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MNA

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attend offering of meals to State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, SSMNC member Sayadaws, SCWCS Sayadaws, Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Sayadaws, title recipient Sayadaws

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing attend offering of meals to State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, SSMNC member Sayadaws, SCWCS Sayadaws, Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Sayadaws, title recipient Sayadaws

NAY PYI TAW, 26 April—The State Peace and Development Council and families of Defence Services (Army, Navy and Air) offered meals to State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, member Sayadaws of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, member Sayadaws of the State Central Working Committee of the Sangha, Tipitakadhara Tipitakakovida Sayadaws and title recipient Sayadaws at Sasana Beikman in the precinct of Uppatasanti Pagoda, here, at 9 am today, attended by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing.

Also present on the occasion were title recipient Sayadaws and nuns, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Command-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye.

The ceremony to plant the Bo Tree was held at the north-east corner of the pagoda at 8 am today. The ceremony was also attended by members of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee led by Presiding Sayadaw of Maha Withutayama Sayadaw of Maha Withutayama Zaygon Monastery in Nay Pyi Taw Pyinmana Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Bhaddanta Kavisara and members of the Sangha, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Command-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye.

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing plant Bo Tree in compound of Uppatasanti Pagoda

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True patriotism

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

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing donate robes and alms to Secretary Sayadaw Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Agga Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Kumarahivamsa.—MNA
Libraries: A shot in the arm to broaden people’s horizon

The government is nurturing human resources to become qualified good and able persons for building a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing nation. In this regard, the government is providing necessary assistance to all the regions of the Union including rural regions. For broadening the horizons of the rural people and for disseminating knowledge to them, self-reliant libraries have been established in the villages.

In doing so, Pyinnya Alin Library was opened in Lonmon Village of Tangyan Township, Lashio District, Shan State (North), on 25 March 2010, Alinyaung Library in Taungpaw Village of Hsinbyume Township of Myitkyina District, Kachin State, on 9 March, a self-reliant library in Loiputaung Village in Mongkai Township, on 16 March and Khithsan (1) Library in Kwinthonhsint Village of Yekyi Township, Ayeyawady Division, on 23 March. The opening ceremonies of the libraries were held in conjunction with the book donation ceremonies.

The opening of libraries reflects the improvement of reading skills and widening the scope of knowledge of the rural people.

Seventy per cent of Myanmar’s population are rural people. Therefore, the rural libraries will contribute much to the broadening of knowledge scope of the people residing in the rural regions. The libraries will be a drive for realizing the political, economic and social objectives of the State, and all the people will have the opportunity to learn the latest developments in the world through the literature.

Nowadays, all-out efforts are being made with added momentum for development of the rural regions. As such, all the people are to strive for ensuring the durability of rural libraries for uplifting their socio-economic standard with a wide range of knowledge and for enabling them to actively take part in respective sectors of nation-building tasks.

Handsets available at special sales of New Mobile

Yangon, 26 April—The special sales of New Mobile will be held at Life Style & IT 2010 at Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road, here, from 28 April to 1 May.

Handsets and fixed phones of GSM, CDMA 450 MHz, CDMA 800 MHz and CDMA 450 card phone will be available at the special sales.

Depending on the types of telephone, handsets will be sold at discount from K50016 to K40,000. The products will be given six months guarantee.

For detailed information, contact No. 271/273 on Bo Aung Kyaw Street (Middle Block), Kyauktada Township, Tel: 01-38659 and 09-5091282.

Information Minister attends cash donation ceremony for MWJA

Yangon, 26 April—Honouring the fifth Literary Conference of Myanmar Writers and Journalists Association, a cash donation ceremony was held at the meeting hall of Printing and Publishing Enterprise on Theinbyu Township here this morning, attended by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan.

First, MWJA Chairman U Hla Myaing (Ko Hsaung) extended greetings.

Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan presented K1 million donated by the ministry and K100,000 by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and wife Daw Kyi Kyi Win and family to the MWJA chairman.

Next, Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Managing Director U Aung Myo Myint of Myanma Motion Picture Enterprise and MWJA vice-chairmen accepted cash and kind worth K17,730,000 donated by wellwishers including K5 million donated by Dr Daw Khin Khin Yi (Shine Hope) Co; K500,000 by YCDC and MWAF; K200,000 each by Myanmar Printers and Publishers Association and U Hta Tun (Hla Tun-Twanyat) and wife Daw Nyunt Nyunt Than; K500,000 by Tun Foundation; K200,000 each by doyen literati U San Win and Dr Tha Tun Oo (Today Literary House) and presented certificates of honour to them.

U Tin Kha (Tektakho TinKho), chairman of fund raising committee for organizing the fifth Literary Conference spoke words of thanks which brought the ceremony to a close.

FM congratulates International Relations and Cooperation Minister of South Africa

Nay Pyi Taw, 26 April—U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, has sent a message of congratulations to Her Excellency Mrs Maite Nkoana Mashabane, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, on the occasion of the Freedom Day of the Republic of South Africa which falls on 27 April 2010.
**Explosion kills 5 at northern Iraq factory**

**BAGHDAD, 26 April** — Five people were killed and 15 others injured in an explosion at a steel factory outside the city of Arbil in northern Iraq on Sunday, local police source said.

The blast occurred in the morning at the Arbil Steel factory located along the main road between the cities of Arbil and Mosul, the source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

The blast took place while the workers were cutting the steel which they used to bring from central and southern Iraq, the source said, adding that the cause of the explosion was not immediately known.

An investigation is underway about the blast that caused severe damages to the factory’s building, the source added.

Arbil, some 350 km north of Baghdad, is part of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

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**Afghan militancy surges as 11 killed, 12 injured on a single day**

**KABUL, 25 April** — Militancy and conflicts have soared in the violence-plagued Afghanistan as some two dozen people mostly of whom civilians lost their lives or sustained injuries in a single day on Sunday.

The day in the Taleban former stronghold Zabul in southern Afghanistan started with an explosion as a suicide bomber attacked a convoy of a private security company leaving four persons dead and wounding another, police said.

Hours ago two more explosions rocked Kandahar city leaving two civilians dead and wounding another, Shirzad stressed. One of the bombs was planted in a motorbike; while the other was planted under garbage ten metres away from the first bomb, he added.

Afghan Police and US forces have condemned off the explosion sites, a Xinhua reporter at the site said. One police vehicle was also damaged in the blast.—Xinhua

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**3rd explosion rocks Kandahar in S Afghanistan**

**KANDAHAR, 26 April** — Third explosion rocks Kandahar the birthplace of Taleban militants in south Afghanistan on Monday, police said.

“The third explosion took place inside a garden outside the provincial capital Kandahar city but fortunately caused no loss of life,” deputy to Provincial Police Chief Assadullah Shirzad told Xinhua.

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**Japanese islanders stage mass rally against US base**

**YOMITAN, 26 April** — Nearly 100,000 protesters attended a rally on Okinawa Sunday to demonstrate against a US air base in a row that is dominating Japan’s national politics and souring its ties with Washington.

Okinawa governor Hirokazu Nakaima, the speaker of the Okinawa assembly and most of the mayors of the Okinawa prefecture’s 41 towns joined the huge protest near Kadena Air Base, the Asia-Pacific region’s largest US military facility.

Under a blazing sun at an athletics ground on the subtropical island, protesters applauded and whistled as speakers addressed them from a podium.

Demonstrators held yellow banners with messages protesting against the US military presence, including: “No Base!” and “US bases leave Okinawa!”

The row centres on US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, which under a 2006 pact with Washington was to be moved from the crowded city of Ginowan to the quieter coastal Henoko area of Okinawa.

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama, whose party won September’s general election by a landslide, has said he will review the 2006 deal and move Futenma off Okinawa island. But a search for alternative locations has provoked more local protests.

“We want Prime Minister Hatoyama to keep to his pledge, especially on the (relocation) of the Futenma air base,” Nakaima said to loud applause at Sunday’s rally.

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**Car bomb blast kills 1, wounds 5 in Baghdad’s Mansour District**

**BAGHDAD, 26 April** — A car attached with a bomb went off close to a military checkpoint in Baghdad’s Mansour District on Sunday afternoon.

“The blast occurred in a main street and killed at least one person and wounded 5 others,” an interior ministry source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Three nearby cars were destroyed by the explosion, he added.

The blast scene was less than 100 metres to Xinhua’s office, a Xinhua reporter clearly heard heavy gun-shots near the site.

Various attacks continue across the country since last month’s parliamentary elections.

On Friday, at least 60 people were killed and 117 others wounded in a string of car bombs and roadside bombs in Baghdad and western Anbar Province.—Xinhua

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East China’s Fujian opens high-speed railway linking to Shanghai

FUZHOU, 26 April—A high-speed rail line linking Fuzhou and Xiamen in east China’s Fujian Province went into operation Monday, as part of the Shenzhen-Shanghai high-speed railway.

The railway, 275 km in length, is designed for trains traveling at a maximum speed of 250 km per hour. It will reduce the travel time between Fuzhou and Xiamen to around 90 minutes from the current 11 hours.

Three pairs of high-speed passenger trains will run between Shanghai and Xiamen during the upcoming Shanghai World Expo to cope with an anticipated increase in passenger numbers.

Fujian, on the western side of the Taiwan Strait, is an important destination for Taiwan residents visiting the mainland. However, roads from Fujian to other provinces are often congested.

“The new line, together with another high-speed railway built last year to connect Fuzhou with Zhejiang Province’s Wenzhou and Hangzhou, will help tackle the problem,” said Zhang Jingui, an official with the railway construction office of Fujian Province.

Another three high-speed rail lines are under construction in Fujian, Guangdong and Zhejiang provinces to link cities, including Shenzhen, Xiamen, Hangzhou and Shanghai. “These railways, covering a total of 1,650 km, will constitute a transport network linking the Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta,” said Tong Yongzhao, an official with Nanchang Railway Bureau, which is responsible for the construction.

Train crew take photos in front of a high-speed train at Fuzhou Railway Station on 26 April, 2010. A high-speed rail line linking Fuzhou and Xiamen in east China’s Fujian Province went into operation on Monday, as the part of Shenzhen-Shanghai high-speed railway.—XINHUA

Beijing Auto Expo opens, focusing on “green” technology

BEIJING, 26 April—With the latest models and techniques at the show, the 10th Beijing International Automotive Exhibition, or Auto China 2010, officially kicked off here on Sunday. The Expo, with a theme of “Imagining the Green Future” this year, will focus on clean energy vehicles with 95 new-energy-driven cars from foreign and Chinese automakers on display. They are joined by 65 concept vehicles and 89 models making their world debut, forming part of the 990 exhibits from 16 countries and regions, according to the Expo’s organizing committee.

European-based BMW, Mercedes Benz, PSA Peugeot Citroen, US-based Ford, Japan’s Nissan, and Hyundai of the Republic of Korea (ROK) are all seeking a bigger share of the market that sped past the United States as the world’s largest last year.

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Air Arabia flight leaves for Bangladesh after emergency landing at Pakistan’s Karachi airport

ISLAMABAD, 26 April—An Air Arabia flight, which earlier made an emergency landing Sunday evening at the Karachi airport in southern Pakistan, was allowed to take off after clearance from the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The flight was on its way from Sharjah to Chittagong, Bangladesh, with 155 passengers and crew on board, when its captain received an indication of smoke in the cargo hold. Without taking any risk, the pilot sought permission from the control tower at the Karachi airport for an emergency landing which was allowed and an emergency declared at the airport. After landing the passengers were immediately evacuated and transferred to the lounge while the CAA engineers and technicians started a check of the aircraft. The official APP news agency quoted a CAA spokesman as saying that nothing wrong was found during check and the indication for smoke was received, perhaps, because of malfunctioning of some equipment and since as per safety rules, no risk can be taken in any such case, the aircraft, a Airbus-320, therefore, made the emergency landing.

The explosion occurred at around 10:40 am Moscow Time (0640 GMT) at 64 Dmitrovskoe Highway, the Interfax news agency reported, citing police sources.

Sri Lanka president leaves for SAARC summit

COLOMBO, 26 April—Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa departed here on Monday to head to the Bhutanese capital of Thimphu, officials said

Rajapaksa is to attend the 16th summit meeting of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) which will be held in Thimphu on 28 April and 29. Rajapaksa is the current chair of SAARC, which hosted the 15th summit in the capital Colombo in August 2008.

This was Rajapaksa’s first overseas visit since he won a second term in the presidential election held in January. His ruling party was returned to power for a second term in the parliamentary election held on 8 April Rajapaksa won over 60 percent of the vote in both elections.

A model poses beside a new Lamborghini car during the media preview at the Beijing Auto Show on 23 April, 2010. In total, nearly 2100 companies from 16 countries and regions will exhibit during 2010 Beijing International Automotive Exhibition.—XINHUA

One dead, two injured in Moscow gas explosion

MOSCOW, 26 April—One person died and two others were injured in a gas explosion at Moscow residence on Monday, local media reported.

The explosion occurred at around 10:40 am Moscow Time (0640 GMT) at 64 Dmitrovskoe Highway, the Interfax news agency reported, citing police sources.

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Moscow, 26 April—One person died and two others were injured in a gas explosion at Moscow residence on Monday, local media reported.

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World Bank reform benefits world development

WASHINGTON, 26 April—The voting power reform approved by the World Bank’s Development Committee on Sunday is a historic move and will let developing countries play bigger roles in world development, said Chinese Finance Minister Xie Xuren.

“This reform has increased the representation and voice of developing countries and made the World Bank’s governance structure fairer and more reasonable,” Xie told reporters in Washington.

“It will protect the interest of developing countries and provide developing countries chances to play a bigger role,” the minister said. “It will also enhance the World Bank’s contribution to helping developing countries’ economic development and poverty reduction.”

World Bank member countries reached an agreement on a 3.13 percent shift in voting power to give emerging and developing nations greater influence in the global institution.

The shift will increase the votes of the developing world to 47.19 percent from 44.06 percent. China’s stake at the bank, in terms of voting power, rises from 2.78 percent to 4.42 percent.

Xie said the reform reflected the reality of enhanced economic power and world status of developing countries. China’s voting power increase will strengthen cooperation between China and the Washington-based international lending institution.

Indonesian banks’ loans increase, lower allocation for manufacturing sector

JAKARTA, 26 April—Despite overall gains in loans to the manufacturing sector declined as of February, local media reported here on Monday. The loans channelled by Indonesian banks reached 1,428.8 trillion rupiah (158.6 billion US dollars) as of February this year, or 9.8 percent higher from a year earlier, the data issued by the Indonesian central bank (BI) showed.

Meanwhile, the loans to the manufacturing sector declined 13.1 percent to 224 trillion rupiah (about 24.8 billion US dollars) as of February this year from 273.7 trillion rupiah (about 30.3 billion US dollars) a year earlier.

Banks preferred to channel more loans to the mining sector with growing demand for natural resources worldwide, analysts said.

“It is more prudent for banks to lend to the mining sector,” Mandiri Sekuritas economist Destry Damayanti was quoted by the Jakarta Post as saying.

The loan to the mining sector increased 40.7 percent to 40.8 trillion rupiah as of February from it was a year earlier.

Oil above $85 on signs US economy improving

SINGAPORE, 26 April—Oil prices gained above $85 a barrel on Monday in Asia as growing optimism about the US economy boosted equity and commodity prices.

Benchmark crude for May delivery was up 16 cents to $85.28 a barrel at midday Singapore Time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose $1.42 to settle at $85.12 on Friday.

Oil prices have bobbed around the $85 a barrel for about three weeks, holding gains after a jump from $69 in February amid signs the US economy is improving.

The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.6 percent Friday, and most Asian stock indices gained on Monday, led by a 2.2 percent jump in Japan and an advance of 1.7 percent in Hong Kong.

Oil traders often look to equity markets as a barometer of overall investor sentiment.

“The economic health of the US is getting better,” said Victor Shum, an energy analyst with consultancy Purvin & Gertz in Singapore.

A man fills the tank of a car at a petrol station.
Oil prices climbed back above 85 dollars a barrel as markets reacted to news of a fresh financial probe into Goldman Sachs, a pickup in jet fuel demand and positive US earnings.

Australian to receive cheaper financial advice in future

CANBERRA, 26 April—More Australians will have access to low-cost, simple financial advice under a series of major reforms to the sector, the Australian federal government announced Monday.

Financial Services Minister Chris Bowen said the future of financial advice reforms were designed to tackle conflicts of interest that had threatened advice quality, and the mis-selling of products.

The package contained three key changes: financial planners will no longer be able to receive commissions; they’ll be legally required to act in the best interest of clients and affordable financial advice services will be expanded.

Given Australia’s aging population, Bowen said accessing sound advice was an important part of planning for the future.

“The expansion in the provision of low-cost, simple advice will be of particular benefit to individuals and families who may not currently have access to financial advice,” Bowen told Australian Associated Press.

Requiring advisers to have their own “product neutral” charging structure, boosting the Australian Securities and Investments Commission’s powers to act against doggy operators and establishing an expert panel to review professional standards were also part of the suite of reforms.

Toyota: global March sales up 26.3 percent on-year

Tokyo, 26 April—Crisis-hit automaker Toyota on Monday said global sales surged 26.3 percent year-on-year in March, despite millions of safety recalls worldwide.

The Toyota group, which includes brands Daihatsu and Hino trucks, said it sold 876,126 vehicles in March, up from 693,759 a year earlier, spokesman Paul Nolasco said.

Also in March, Toyota said global production jumped 82.2 percent to 860,534 units compared to a year ago, when the industry was in the grip of the global economic crisis.

The beleaguered carmaker has recalled around ten million vehicles worldwide in recent months due to a series of accelerator and brake defects.

In the latest blow, it was downgraded by ratings agency Moody’s over the impact of mass recalls on the company’s future profitability.

Toyota recently widened a recall of two sports utility vehicles—the Lexus GX 460 and some models of the LandCruiser Prado—to 34,000 units worldwide over stability problems.
Armed man arrested at NC Airport as Obama departs

ASHEVILLE, 26 April—An armed man spotted at a North Carolina Airport parking lot just after Air Force One departed Sunday told an officer he wanted to see the president and had a car equipped with police gear, including a siren and flashing lights, authorities said.

Joseph Sean McVey, 23, of Coshocton, Ohio, is charged with going armed in terror of the public, a misdemeanor, said Asheville Regional Airport Police Capt. Kevan Smith.

Security was heightened at the airport because President Barack Obama was leaving after spending the weekend vacationing in Asheville. He was headed to a memorial service for 29 West Virginia coal miners killed in an explosion. At about 2 pm, airport police saw McVey get out of a maroon car with Ohio plates and that he had a sidearm, Smith said.

Both airport police and the Secret Service questioned him and he was taken into custody. The suspect was nowhere near the president’s plane, which had just departed, and was in a rental car return lot that is open to the public, Smith said.

Sanaa, 26 April—British Ambassador to Yemen Tim Torlot escaped unharmed in an explosion near his convoy on Monday morning, but one unidentified person was killed in the attack, a security source told Xinhua.

The explosion was believed to have been launched by a suicide bomber, and the victim was not a member of the British embassy, said the source.

Local reports said that the victim seemed to be the suicide attacker whose body was torn into pieces.

An investigation into the attack has already been under-way.

The Spanish navy captured eight suspected pirates off the coast of Somalia on Sunday as part of Europe’s anti-piracy mission in the area, the Defence Ministry said.

A helicopter in contact with NATO-lead International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) made an emergency landing in Farah Province in western Afghanistan on Sunday, a Press release of the alliance said. “A civilian contract helicopter made an emergency landing in Farah Province this morning due to reported mechanical problems,” the Press release added.

Spain captures 8 suspected Somali pirates

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The Span ish navy destroyed the whaler and took its eight crew on a skiff toward the Somali coast, the ministry said in a statement.

Teen sailor set to reach home in two weeks

Sixteen-year-old Australian sailor Jessica Watson aboard her bright pink 10.23-metre (33.56-foot) yacht on Sydney Harbour ahead of her trip.

Photo taken on 26 March, 2010 shows that villagers fry Suomain, a traditional stretched noodle, in Nanshan Village in Wenzhou City, east China’s Zhejiang Province. The Nanshan Village owns over 300 year history of making Suomain and there are over 300 family workshops in the village and most of the product is sold abroad.

New York club offers dogs royal treatment

New York’s Fetch Club says it will offer dogs spa baths, homemade meals, holistic mud masks, facials and manicures.

The dogs will even be able to rock out at a doggie disco when the indoor club opens inside a 200-year-old former tobacco factory in the Financial District next month, co-owner Peter Ba lestrieri told the New York Post.

“We’re serious about the well-being of animals, but we also want them to have fun,” said co-owner Jenna Lee, a former finance worker who is taking veterinary courses.

“The dogs are our clients and all our services are geared to them.”

Spain captures 8 suspected Somali pirates

A picture released on March 2010 by the EU Navfor shows two suspected pirates standing in the 10-metre-long (30-foot) whaler off the Somali coast.— Internet

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Initial reports indicated there were no injuries among those on board, the press release stressed. Without pro-viding more information, the Press release said, “ISAF forces have responded to assist.”

News Album

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Sixteen-year-old Australian sailor Jessica Watson aboard her bright pink 10.23-metre (33.56-foot) yacht on Sydney Harbour ahead of her trip.

Australian school-girl Jessica Watson is set to complete her round-the-world solo sail by early next month and become the youngest person to ever complete the epic journey, her spokeswoman said Sunday.

After more than six months at sea, during which the 16-year-old has withstood a brutal storm in the Atlantic and 10-metre-high (33 foot) waves, Watson is now back in Australian waters and heading east for Sydney.

“At the moment it’s all going well,” spokesman Andrew Fraser told AFP, adding that Watson was covering about 110 nautical miles per day.

Swimmers cross Orinoco River in test of endurance

Hundreds of competitors swim across the turbulent Orinoco River on Sunday in a grueling test of endurance that is an annual tradition in Venezuela.

A total of 805 men and women participated in the 1.9-mile (3.1-kilometer) contest, and 520 of them reached the finish after fighting the current of one of the world’s largest rivers.

Others were pushed too far downstream and had to be picked up by boats.

The race is held every year on the Orinoco just downstream from its confluence with the Caroni River.

The athletes first swam across the muddy waters of the Orinoco, which was swelled by recent rains, before crossing the darker coffee-coloured waters of the Caroni.

New York club offers dogs royal treatment

New York’s Fetch Club says it will offer dogs spa baths, homemade meals, holistic mud masks, facials and manicures.

The dogs will even be able to rock out at a doggie disco when the indoor club opens inside a 200-year-old former tobacco factory in the Financial District next month, co-owner Peter Balestrieri told the New York Post.

“We’re serious about the well-being of animals, but we also want them to have fun,” said co-owner Jenna Lee, a former finance worker who is taking veterinary courses.

“The dogs are our clients and all our services are geared to them.”

Swimmers are driven on a boat to the start point of the ‘Swim across the Orinoco and the Caroni rivers race’ in San Felix, southern Venezuela, on Sunday, 25 April, 2010. About 900 swimmers took part in the 3.1 Kilometre (1.9 mile) annual race across one of the largest rivers in the world, the Orinoco.
Management of industrial zones in Yangon Division discussed

YANGON, 26 April—The Yangon Division Management Committee for Industrial Zones held the coordination meeting at the hall of Yangon Command Headquarters on Konmyintha, here, this afternoon, with an address by Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence.

Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council and Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Win Myint and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin reported on matters related to the industrial zones. Responsible persons submitted the reports on their respective sectors and requirements.

Lt-Gen Myint Swe, the commander and the mayor fulfilled the requirements.

After the meeting, Lt-Gen Myint Swe and party viewed the low-cost fry-proof latrine made of recycled plastic products and the tricycle garbage bin to be donated to YCDC. — MNA

Sagaing Division most active in December mass sports

NAY PYI TAW, 26 April—Sagaing Division stood first ahead of Yangon Division in December mass sports activity for the year 2009. Lashio excelled others in township level mass sports activity of the cold season, followed by Chanayethazan and Thayet townships respectively. — MNA
Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services

Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior Gen-

eral Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party receive Nine Precepts from Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Gunesana.—MNA

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing...

(from page 1)

Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win, member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence and their wives, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, the General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet present robes and provisions to Vice-Chairman Presiding Nayaka of Mandalay Masoein Monastery Bhaddanta Tejosarabhiyamsa.—MNA

Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadha Bhaddanta Gunesana.

Members of the Sangha recited Parittas.

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing offered robes and alms to Secretary of SSMNC Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Bhamo Monastery Mandalay Abhidhaja Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa.

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San offer robes and provisions to Vice-Chairman of SSMNC Dhammikayama Kyakpi Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Gunesana of Yankin Township.

MNA

Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win donate robes and alms to Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Presiding Nayaka of Toungoo Myazigon Monastery Bhaddanta Pandavamsa.

MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San offer robes and provisions to Vice-Chairman of SSMNC Dhammikayama Kyakpi Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Gunesana of Yankin Township.

MNA

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MNA
Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing offer fruits to Buddha Image at Sasana Beikman of Uppatasanti Pagoda.

MNA

Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party offer day meal to members of the Sangha.—MNA

(from page 8)

General Thura Shwe Mann and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet presented robes and provisions to Vice-Chairman of SSMNC Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Masoeyein Monastery of Mandalay Mahaungmye Township Agga Maha Pandita Bhaddanta Tejosarabhivamsa.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khin Win donated robes and alms to Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Presiding Nayaka of Myazigon Monastery of Toungoo Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Pandavamsa.

SPDC member Lt-Gen Tin Aye offered robes and donations to Vice-Chairman Sayadaw Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Lewun Monastery of Thaton Township of Mon State Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Sinrinda.

The Commander-in-Chief (Navy), the Commander-in-Chief (Air), senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, the Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, the ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Chairman of Civil Service Selection Training Board and officials offered robes and alms to members of the Sangha.

Daw Kyaing Kyaing, wife of Senior General Than Shwe, presented offertories to the title recipient nun.

Secretary Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumarabhivamsa delivered a sermon, and Senior General Than Shwe, wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party shared merits gained.

After the ceremony, the Senior General, wife and party offered fruits to the Buddha Image in the Dhamma Beikman and day meals to members of the Sangha.

MNA
Venezuela wants better ties with Bogota

CARACAS, 26 April—President Hugo Chavez said Sunday he wants to repair strained relations with Colombia, saying he hopes a breakthrough is possible regardless of which candidate wins the neighbouring nation’s presidential ballot next month.

But the socialist Chavez, who has been fiercely critical of Colombia’s outgoing conservative president, Alvaro Uribe, added that any effort to end the diplomatic conflict won’t be possible unless Colombia’s next leader fully respects his government.

“I’m not going to tolerate a single act of disrespect toward our country,” Chavez said, speaking during his weekly television and radio programme. Colombians vote 30 May on a successor for Uribe, whose term ends on 7 Aug.

While Chavez said he hopes for improved relations with Colombia’s next president, he said efforts to lessen tensions would face serious obstacles if Uribe’s close ally—Juan Manuel Santos—wins the presidential vote.

He also said that Colombia could become a serious threat to its neighbors if Santos, a former defence minister, is elected.

“As president, Santos could cause a war in this part of the world,” Chavez said. “Santos doesn’t respect anything.”

During an exclusive interview Sunday with The Associated Press in Bogota, Santos said he disapproves of Chavez’s politics, although he believes Colombia’s relations with Venezuela could improve if ties are based on mutual respect.

Thousands of people lose homes in Manila fire

MANILA, 26 April—A huge fire sweeping through a shantytown outside the Philippine capital has destroyed about 300 houses and left about 7,000 people homeless.

Metropolitan Manila Fire Marshal Pablo Cordeta said Monday that firetrucks are battling the fire that started at midafternoon Sunday and was still burning at nightfall. It spread rapidly in the slum in Quezon city because of strong winds and the scorching summer heat.

Firefighters struggled to penetrate alleys, which were clogged by people trying to save their belongings. Residents wept as they watched their burning houses.

A weeping resident, Glen Sardon, says “We failed to save anything except our clothes.” Cordeta said at least two residents were reported missing.

Kuwait’s Gulf Bank profits decline due to provisions

KUWAIT CITY, 26 April—Kuwait’s Gulf Bank, which incurred heavy losses from the global financial crisis, on Sunday reported a decline in first quarter net profit due to taking huge provisions against risky loans.

The emirate’s second-biggest bank posted a meagre 1.8 million dollars in net profit in the first three months of 2010 compared to 5.5 million dollars in the same period of the previous year, the bank said in a statement.

Although the bank posted 154 million dollars in operating profits between January and March, a massive 280 percent rise from the corresponding period in 2009, most of it was used as provisions, the statement said.

The provisions were made to offset the risks of certain existing credit facilities, chairman Ali Rasheed al-Bader said.

In 2009, the bank posted a loss of 97.5 million dollars compared to 1.24 billion dollars in losses the previous year.

In October 2008, the Gulf Bank lost 1.3 billion dollars from derivatives deals when a number of its clients defaulted due to the world financial crisis. But it managed to raise an equal amount in January last year by doubling its capital.

Three shopping mall evacuated in Indian capital after bomb threat

NEW DELHI, 26 April—Three shopping malls were evacuated in a posh area in the Indian national capital on Sunday, following a bomb threat, a senior police official said.

“The malls were evacuated after an anonymous caller told the police that explosives have been kept in DLF Mall, Select Citywalk and Metropolitan Mall in Saket in the south of the capital. A thorough search is being conducted, but it seems that the call was nothing but a hoax. But, we are not leaving any chances,” the official said.

A search has been launched to track down the caller, he said.

A series of similar anonymous calls were made to the police Saturday, which claimed that bombs were places at Indira Gandhi International Airport and the city railway station, but the calls turned out to be hoaxes.

India has stepped up security measures in New Delhi after some Western countries issued a travel advisory warning of possible terrorist attacks in the Indian capital last week.

Released penguins make their way to the water on a beach in South Africa in 2000. Four major developing countries meeting in South Africa on Sunday called for a global, legally binding agreement on climate change to be finalized by next year at the latest.

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Chinese herdsman suffer little loss from worst snowstorms in 50 years

HORSHOT, 26 April—Baolidao is happy to talk about how he got through the worst snows in 50 years without losing a single one of his 500 sheep or 70 cows.

"Not only did all my sheep survive, but also gave birth to about 300 lambs during the winter," said the herdsman of Xinbaarhuoozhu Banner, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

More than 20 successive snowstorms this winter and spring isolated the Hulun Buir Grasslands, making getting in and out nearly impossible. However, visitors are coming back the grasslands as the snow thaws.

China's largest pasture area in Inner Mongolia was not only plagued by heavy snow falls since the beginning of winter but also suffered the worst spring cold snap in 30 years, with temperatures dropping to as low as 49 degrees below freezing.

The veteran herdsman said the key for his livestock's survival was greenhouse-like shelters and a good supply of winter feed.—Xinhua

Death toll from clashes between Darfur tribe, SPLA rises to 58

KHARTOUM, 26 April—Death toll from the continued clashes between Rizeigat tribe and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) in South Darfur State in western Sudan rose to 58.

The clashes erupted on Friday and "are still ongoing," 58 people were wounded, Mohamed Ilyssa Elai, chairman of Rizeigat tribe's Shura (consultation) council, told Xinhua. "The casualties are expected to rise," he added. The incidents took place at Bulbulua area, some 200 km south of Matarqin town in the South Darfur State. Saturday’s report said 17 civilians were killed and 11 others wounded during the clashes.

The SPLA is the military wing of the former rebel Sudan People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM), which became one of the ruling partners in Sudanese government following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005.

Internet

Nine civilians killed in shelling in Somali capital

MOGADISHU, 26 April—A medical official says at least nine people have been killed in shelling in rebel-controlled areas of Somalia’s capital.

Mogadishu ambulance service chief Ali Muse says 40 wounded people were also taken to hospitals after shelling rocked the capital on Sunday.

He says the dead were all civilians. Witnesses say the shelling followed a brief clash between government forces and insurgents and targeted strategic areas including the city’s main Bakara market.

Islamic insurgents control much of Mogadishu and have been trying to topple the fragile government including the city’s main Bakara market. Residents say they are sick of the ongoing violence.

Somalia has not had an effective government for nearly 20 years.

Internet

Colombian army kills five FARC rebels, detains two members

BOGOTA, 26 April—The Colombian Army killed five members of the country’s largest rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and detained two FARC members, Commander of the Ninth Brigade William Torres said on Sunday.

Torres said two rebels were killed in a combat in San Vicente del Caguan municipality of southern Caquetá department, while three others were killed in San Agustín municipality of southwestern Huila department. In its operation in Planadas town in Tolima department in centre-west of the country, the army detained a senior FARC member known as “Pomplio”.

In Huila, it detained an alleged FARC member with the alias of “Alcides”. Torres said four soldiers were injured by land mines in the operations.—Internet

16-year-old California teen gives up solo voyage

MARINA DEL REY, 26 April—A 16-year-old Southern California girl hoping to become the youngest person to sail around the world alone has ended her quest and will head to South Africa for boat repairs.

Abby Sunderland wrote on her blog Saturday that it is not prudent to attempt to sail across the ocean, and she will complete her trek back to Marina del Rey.

Sunderland, of Thousand Oaks, embarked on 23 Jan after older brother Zac completed a westerly solo circumnavigation at the age of 17.

The record for the youngest person to circumnavigate is held by 17-year-old Mike Perham of Britain.—Internet

Malaria kills 300,000 children in Nigeria

ABUJA, 26 April — An estimated 300,000 children die of malaria every year in Nigeria, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Paula Fedeski, UNICEF’s chief communication officer disclosed this in a statement sent to reporters in Abuja on Sunday.

Malaria remains a major public health problem in Nigeria, the statement said, noting that an estimated 300,000 children die of the disease each year.

According to the international body, up to 11 percent of maternal mortality is caused by malaria, which represents one in every four deaths of children and one in 10 deaths of pregnant women.

Xinhua
**Home-made gin kills 80 in a month in Uganda**

LONDON, 26 April—Eighty people have died in southwestern Uganda over the past month after drinking locally made gin containing high levels of methanol. "I can confirm the number of deaths is now at 80 and the cause is this local waragi," said Patrick Tissium, health officer for the Kabale district. Waragi is the local name for home-brewed alcohol made variously from cassava, bananas, mullet or cane sugar, depending on the region. The drink that caused the deaths was a home-made gin popular in Uganda which contained high levels of methanol, a substance used in industry as a solvent or anti-freeze, the officer said. "Leaders in the district have tried to communicate the dangers of taking these drinks, but for some reason, the message has not gotten through to the population," Wilfred Niwagaba, a member of parliament for Kabale, said.

**Police this week confiscated hundreds of litres of home-brewed alcohol in a district on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

**Arrest in iPad finger-mangling theft**

DENVER, 26 April—Police in Denver said on Saturday they have arrested a suspect in the theft of an iPad in which the victim lost his pinky finger. Police said they arrested Brandon Darnell Smith, 20, at 1:14 am MDT during a traffic stop. Smith was being held for investigation of second-degree assault and robbery in the 15 April robbery of Bill Jordan, 59, The Denver Post reported.

Jordan said he had just purchased an iPad—the newest product from Apple Inc—at the Cherry Creek Shopping Centre on 15 April when the suspect followed him down a staircase to the parking garage and accosted him, yanking so hard at the iPad he stripped some of the skin to the bone on his little finger. Jordan’s finger was so badly damaged it required amputation.
Knowledge ups healthcare support

Indianapolis, 26 April — If more Americans knew what was included in the healthcare reform law, more may support it, a US survey indicates.

“When we looked at the responses of those who said they wanted to repeal the law and start from scratch, with the exception of the requirement that all Americans purchase health insurance, most of the things that they wanted are already written into the law,” Dr. Aaron Carroll, director of Indiana University’s Center for Health Policy and Professionalism Research, says in a statement.

“It appears that the mandate of requiring Americans to buy health insurance may be the one thing they stringently oppose, and that may be the main motive for the push to repeal the legislation.”

How the public option was described impacted the survey. When the public option was described as a government-administered option “competing” with private health insurance, 48 percent favored it, but when framed as a “choice” between government-provided health insurance or private health insurance almost 75 percent favored the public option. The survey of 600 adults in the 48 contiguous states and District of Columbia was conducted.

Genes influence smoking addiction

Paris, 26 April — Starting smo-king and addiction to it could be driven to a large degree by your genes, a trio of studies published on Sunday suggested.

Researchers reported that single yet widely prevalent changes in the DNA code on several chromosomes were associated with a range of smoking habits. The papers, published online in the journal Nature Genetics, are based on a trawl through the genome of more than 140,000 people, gathering smokers and non-smokers.

A flag was raised over a variant on a gene on Chromosome 11 that was strongly linked to smoking initiation, and another on Chromosome 9 that was associated with quitting smoking.

People with variants of genes on Chromosomes 8 and 19 were likelier to smoke more cigarettes — about half a cigarette extra per day — and run a 10-percent higher risk of lung cancer compared to non-carriers, another of the studies added.

The findings add to a basket of known gene variants linked to smoking vulnerability.

Together, they contribute towards diagnostic tools to identify people who may have a high inherited risk from tobacco.

Want to lose weight?

Quit smoking

Navarra, 26 April — Not only does smoking not make people thinner, it is linked to weight gain, researchers in Spain said.

Lead author Francisco Javier Basterra-Gortari of the University of Navarra said nicotine poisoning was linked to weight gain.

The study, published in Revista Espanola de Cardiologia, found after tracking smokers, non-smokers and those who quit, those who had never smoked put on the least amount of weight over a 4-year period.

The researchers tracked 7,565 people age 50 and older for initial body mass index, being sedentary, physical activity, calorie/fiber intake, snacks between meals and consumption of soda, fast food and alcohol.

Ace those finals: Nap with dreams

Boston, 26 April — Plenty of naps — especially if they include dreams — may make studying more successful for final exams, a US researcher says.

Robert Stickgold of the Harvard Medical School in Boston advises studying hard right before going to bed or taking a nap after intense afternoon study — but also taking note of habits or mental processes that lead to dreaming about what needs to be remembered.

Stickgold and colleagues had study participants learn the layout of a three-dimensional maze on a computer screen with the aim of finding a landmark. Five hours later they were placed at a random location within the virtual space. Those allowed to take a nap who reported dreaming found the landmark in less time than those who had not slept or who slept but did not report dreaming.

Scientists uncover deep ocean current near Antarctica

Singapore, 26 April — Scientists have discovered a fast-moving deep ocean current with the volume of 40 Amazon Rivers near Antarctica that will help researchers monitor the impacts of climate change on the world’s oceans.

A team of Australian and Japanese scientists, in a study published in Sunday’s issue of the journal Nature Geoscience, found that the current is a key part of a global ocean circulation pattern that helps control the planet’s climate.

Scientists had previously detected evidence of the current but had no data on it.

“We didn’t know if it was a significant part of the circulation or not and this shows clearly that it is,” one of the authors, Steve Rintoul, told Reuters.

Rintoul, of the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystems Cooperative Research Center in Hobart, said it proved to be the fastest deep ocean current yet found, with an average speed of 20 cm (7.9 inches) a second. It was also found to carry more than 12 million cubic meters a second of very cold, salty water from Antarctica.

A sand sculpture artist and a worker finish the sand sculpture work in the theme of the Shanghai World Expo on the beach in Wendeng City, east China’s Shandong Province, on 25 April, 2010. Twenty group of sand sculpture work are shown at the beach in Wendeng City, east China’s Shandong Province, on 25 April, 2010. Boys hold their puppies which survived a huge fire in Manila’s Quezon city on 26 April, 2010. One person was killed while more than 7,000 lost their homes after a huge fire swept through a slum district in Quezon city on Sunday, police said.—Internet
Rooney wins PFA player of the year award

LONDON, 26 April—Manchester United and England striker Wayne Rooney won the Professional Footballers’ Association player of the year award at a ceremony here on Sunday and then declared his readiness for the World Cup.

Rooney, currently out of action with a groin injury, is widely regarded as being central to England’s chances of winning the World Cup in South Africa later this year.

“I’m good,” Rooney told guests at the PFA dinner at Grosvenor House in central London. “I’m disappointed to miss a couple of games. Hopefully I will play before the season finishes.”

Ancelotti says Chelsea squad must beat Liverpool

LONDON, 26 April—Carlo Ancelotti admits Chelsea will have to win their crunch clash at Liverpool next weekend if they want to pip Manchester United to the Premier League title. Ancelotti’s side regained a place in the title race on Sunday as their imperious 7-0 destruction of Stoke at Stamford Bridge moved the Blues one point clear of second-placed United.

Just 24 hours after United had replaced Chelsea on top of the table, they romped to their record top-flight win — and their third seven-goal haul this term.

Danish keeper Sorensen faces World Cup heartbreak

LONDON, 26 April — Stoke City’s Danish international goalkeeper Thomas Sorensen could miss the World Cup after dislocating his elbow during his team’s 7-0 Premier League mauling at Chelsea on Sunday.

Sorensen suffered the injury when he collided with Salomon Kalou as the Chelsea player slotted home the second goal of a hat-trick at Stamford Bridge.

“He has definitely dislocated his elbow,” said Stoke manager Tony Pulis. “We are hoping they can just pop it back in without him needing an operation. If he needs an operation he will be struggling for the World Cup.”

Sorensen was stretchered off and replaced by Asmir Begovic after the 31st-minute collision.

Burnley’s Laws pleads for club’s survival job

BURNLEY, 26 April — Burnley manager Brian Laws insisted he would remain in charge of the club despite a 4-0 defeat to Liverpool condemning them to relegation after just one season in the top flight.

Laws said: “If we are not good enough, we haven’t done well enough against those teams around us at the bottom end.

That’s why we are where we are. “That’s a mini-league and we haven’t done well enough in it. It’s a horrible feeling. But we should be proud of ourselves because we’ve had a taste of what it’s like and we will bounce back next season.

“The club have done the right thing in making sure the financial structure is in place. This will hurt for a few weeks but we can move on.

“I’ll be here next season and I’m looking forward to the challenge of bouncing back.”

Late Artesa penalty gives Everton victory

LIVERPOOL, 26 April — Mikel Artesa converted an injury-time penalty to give Everton a come from behind 2-1 win over Fulham at Goodison Park on Sunday to keep their slim hopes of Europa League football next season alive. Erik Nevland gave Fulham a 36th-minute lead against the run of play before Victor Anichebe hauled Everton level five minutes after his arrival as a half-time substitute.

Everton grabbed the winner from the spot in the fourth minute of injury time after Chris Baird fouled Tim Cahill who was celebrating his 200th appearance for the Merseysiders.

Bohn wins Zurich Classic by 2 strokes

AVONDALE, 26 April—For Jason Bohn, the second time was even better. Bohn won the Zurich Classic on Sunday for his second PGA Tour title, birdeeing three of the final four holes at TPC Louisiana for a 5-under 67 and a two-stroke victory over Jeff Overton. “This is life changing,” said the 37-year-old Bohn, who admitted making his putt on 18 with tears in his eyes.

Bohn, who completed a third-round 71 in the morning in the weather-plagued tournament, finished at 18-under 270. He also won the 2005 BC Open. Sunday’s victory, coming as it did after a variety of injuries and back surgery, was especially sweet, Bohn said. He told his caddie at the start of the final round he was planning on a quiet round.

Americans face Italy in Fed Cup tennis final

BIRMINGHAM, 26 April — The United States has advanced to a Fed Cup final rematch with defending champion Italy following a dramatic 3-2 semi-final victory over Russia.

Huber and Bethanie Mattek-Sands defeated Russia’s Elena Dementieva and Alla Kudryavtseva 6-3, 6-1 in the decisive doubles match of the indoor hardcourt tie after the teams split singles matches on Saturday and Sunday.

The US duo broke twice in the first set and again in the first and third games of the second set for a 3-0 lead.

The rivals exchanged breaks to 4-1 before the Americans held and broke again to win the match in just 65 minutes. The US women lost at Italy in last year’s final but will have a chance to avenge that defeat on home soil in the championship showdown on 6-7 November. The Americans were without Serena and Venus Williams, both absent because of leg injuries.
6.9-magnitude earthquake hits sea area off NE Philippines

MANILA, 26 April — An earthquake measuring 6.9 magnitude on the Richter scale hit a sea area 271 km of Batan Islands off northeastern Philippines at 10:59 am (0259 GMT) on Monday, according to the US Geological Survey. The epicenter of the quake was initially determined to be 22.247 degrees north latitude and 123.733 degrees east longitude.

There are no reports of casualties and damages so far. The Philippines sits on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” where continental plates collide, causing frequent seismic and volcanic activity.

Xinhua

WEATHER

Monday, 26th April, 2010

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr. M.S.T. During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been scattered in Kachin and Chin States, isolated in Shan and Kayin States, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Day temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) above April average temperatures in Shan, Chin, Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin and Mon States, Mandalay and Bago Divisions. Island (3°C) to (6°C) above April average temperature in lower Sagaing. Magway, Yangon, Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) below April average temperatures in Kayin State and upper Sagaing Division. The significant day temperatures were Minbu (43.6°C), Myingyan (43°C). The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Patau(0.71) inch, Yamethin(0.39) inch, Pyinoolwin(0.31) inch. Maximum temperature on 26-4-2010 was 104°F. Minimum temperature on 25-4-2010 was 79°F. Relative humidity at (09-30) hours M.S.T. on 26-4-2010 was 55%. Total sun shine hours on 25-4-2010 was (10.7) hours.

Rainfall on 26-4-2010 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2010 was (1) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Nil at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (5) mph from South at (17:30) hrs M.S.T. on 26-4-2010.

Bay Inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman sea and South Bay and generally fair elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 27th April 2010: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Kachin, Chin, Shan, Rakhine and Mon States, Sagaing, Mandalay, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions. Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. 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 the Southern Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 27-4-2010: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in the afternoon and evening. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 27-4-2010: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers in the afternoon and evening. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 27-4-2010: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers in the afternoon and evening. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Only with stability and peace will the nation develop
Only with stability and peace will democratization process be successful

Anarchy begets anarchy, not democracy
Riots beget riots, not democracy
Democracy can be introduced only through constitution

People’s Desire
- We favour peace and stability
- We favour development
- We oppose unrest and violence
- Wipe out those inciting unrest and violence

VOA, BBC-sowing hatred among the people
RFA, DVB-generating public outrage
Do not allow ourselves to be swayed by killer broadcasts designed to cause troubles

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing plant a Bo Tree.

Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Nyan Tun, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence and wives, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and wife, ministers, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the chairman of the Civil Service Selection and Training Board, deputy ministers, departmental heads, members of the board of trustees of Uppatasanti Pagoda, officials concerned and guests. Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing enshrined jewels at the place chosen to plant the Bo Tree, planted the tree and fed fertilizers and poured water on it. Afterwards, they sprinkled scented water on it.

Afterwards, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann and wife, Prime Minister General Thein Sein and wife and Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Tin Aye spread fertilizers, poured water and sprinkled scented water on the tree.

Reciting religious verses, Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party went around the tree clock-wise. The ceremony concluded with three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanam Ciram Titthatu.

Hlawga Park to extend opening time
YANGON, 26 April— Hlawga Park of Forest Department will be kept open on 27 April (Fullmoon Day of Kason) and 1 May (May Day) from 8 am to 6 pm instead of from 8 am to 4 pm for public recreation and relaxation.

The significant day temperatures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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