Prime Minister inspects construction of durable houses for storm victims in Ayeyawady Division

Officials urged to help grow paddy fully in townships

NAY PYI TAW, 24 June — Chairman of the National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee Prime Minister General Thein Sein, accompanied by members of NDPCC ministers, deputy ministers, the Director-General of the Government Office and officials, arrived in Mawlamyinegyun from Pathein this morning.

At the hall of the local battalion, the Prime Minister and party heard a report presented by Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt on relief aid including food being provided to storm survivors in Mawlamyinegyun Township, distribution of paddy seeds, requirement of paddy seeds, arrival of power tillers, land preparation for monsoon paddy and cultivation of paddy, progress in reconstruction of schools, reopening of schools, progress in reconstruction of hospitals and installation of TV retransmission stations, reconstruction of Mawlamyinegyun Township and regional development tasks.

Next, the ministers who accompanied the Prime Minister reported on measures to be taken by the respective ministries for rehabilitation of the storm-hit regions in Ayeyawady Division including Mawlamyinegyun Township.

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THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR   Wednesday, 25 June, 2008

PERSPECTIVES

Reconstruction tasks in full swing thanks to collaboration

Due to the cyclone that hit Myanmar severely in early May, some areas in Ayeyawady and Yangon divisions not only lost many lives of local people but also suffered destruction to their economic, education and health enterprises.

The government is now carrying out relief, rehabilitation and preparedness tasks in order of priority in the storm-affected areas. So far, it has spent funds heavily on the works.

Reconstruction tasks are being carried out with the donations of the government and well-wishers in the storm-hit areas to provide shelter, food, and health care and requirements are being fulfilled for the victims to be able to resume their businesses.

Measures are being taken with added momentum under the leadership of the government to reconstruct ravaged houses and buildings and to ensure normalcy of power supply and communication services. In building new roads for smooth transport, the roads are designed to be higher than normal in the affected areas stretching to the coastal regions. So, the programme will contribute towards long-term natural disaster preparedness works.

Hospitals and basic education schools are being upgraded, while reconstruction works are being carried out for the convenience of local people in the affected areas. So, the entire region will enjoy improvement in the education and health sectors.

Due to the strenuous efforts the government, the people and the Tatmadaw are making with heart and soul with the use of the cash and kind and services being contributed by well-wishers and donors to materialize reconstruction works, the tasks are now gaining momentum in the storm-hit areas.

VOA airs falsehood that tornado wipes out entire Kaingthoung village

NAY Pyi Taw, 24 June—The VOA, one of the foreign broadcasting stations notoriously known for airing falsehood with negative attitude, made up a new story on 23 June. The invented story said that a tornado carrying a great deal of sand and earth struck Kaingthoung village of Pyinsalu in Labutta Township, Ayeyawady Division, on 19 May, killing all the villagers with all the houses overwhelmed and covered by sand and earth.

The fact was that some 300 houses were damaged as a result of the storm Nargis in Kaingthoung village of Pyinsalu and there were no casualties in the storm. In the aftermath of the storm, the State carried out rehabilitation tasks and now all the houses have been rebuilt. A total of 3744 people are now in good health. There was no incident of tornado that struck Kaingthoung village as broadcast. As such there were no casualties and damages.

The VOA holding negative views always broadcast fabricated news. In this regard, the people feel that it is necessary to listen to the news of the VOA with common sense. — MNA

Man Fut Tong Welfare Society and JBS Co of Singapore donate supplies to storm victims

YANGON, 24 June—A ceremony to donate relief supplies to the storm victims was held at the building of Myanmar Port Authority in Bo Aung Kyaw container yard this afternoon.

The supplies were donated by Man Fut Tong Welfare Society and JBS Co of Singapore.

It was attended by Lt-Gen Myint Swe of the Ministry of Defence, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Yangon Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint, officials of Man Fut Tong Welfare Society and JBS Co of Singapore, Managing Director U Kyaw Khin of JBS Co and members.

Vice-President Miss Jane Jan of Man Fut Tong Welfare Society and Managing Director U Kyaw Khin of JBS Co presented the supplies to the deputy minister and Director-General of Relief and Resettlement Department U Than Oo.

The five containers of supplies include assorted biscuits, condensed milk, dried noodles, juices, sea food, bottled water, canned food, medicines, clothes, blankets, toys, watches and slippers worth US $ 64765.21.

Relief supplies for the victims donated by wellwishers from abroad arrived here by air or by ship. They are being delivered to the storm-hit areas by helicopter, vehicle or ship without delay. — MNA
**Adviser sorry he said terror attack would help McCain**

Fredino, 24 June — An adviser to Sen. John McCain apologized Monday for saying a terrorist attack on the United States would be “a big advantage” for the Republican presidential candidate.

Adviser Charlie Black apologized for saying McCain’s campaign would benefit from another US terror attack. Adviser Charlie Black apologized for saying McCain’s campaign would benefit from another US terror attack. McCain said he “strenuously disagreed” with the remark.

Charlie Black, a senior adviser to McCain, said he “deeply regrets” his comments to Fortune magazine. “They were inappropriate,” Black told reporters at a fund-raising event in California. “I recognize that John McCain has devoted his entire life to protecting his country.”

**Israeli Forces kill 2 Palestinians in West Bank**

Nablus, 24 June — Israeli forces killed two Palestinians, including an Islamic Jihad commander, in the West Bank city of Nablus on Tuesday in the first fatal raid since a ceasefire took hold in the Gaza Strip last week.

Islamic Jihad threatened to launch attacks inside Israel to avenge the death of Tarek Juma Abu Ghali, whom the militant group described as one of its most senior commanders in the northern West Bank.

A second Palestinian, affiliated with the Islamic militant group Hamas, was also killed in the overnight raid, Palestinian security sources said.

The killings, which were confirmed by the Israeli army, could test the fragile ceasefire that took effect last Thursday between Israel and militants in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

**Four Americans die in Iraq attack**

Baghdad, 24 June — Two American soldiers, two US civilians and six Iraqis have been killed in a bomb attack at a local council office in eastern Baghdad.

One of the US civilians was an official with the state department and the other worked for the defence department, US embassy officials said.

Ten people were wounded including three members of the Sad City council.

The US military has blamed the attack on what it calls “special groups”, or rogue members of Shia Muslim militias.

Iraqi police said the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber, but investigations by the US military suggested a bomb had been planted in the building.

A suspect who tested positive for contact with explosives had been caught trying to flee the scene, the US said.

Eyewitnesses said the bomb exploded inside the office of the deputy leader of the council, who was among the injured.

**Pirates take four European tourists hostage**

Mogadishu, 24 June — Pirates took four European tourists hostage after their yacht ran out of fuel off the coast of northern Somalia in the Red Sea’s Gulf of Aden, according to a Somali official. The pirates then took their hostages — a man, woman, their child and their yacht’s pilot — into hills around the fishing town of Las Qoray, said Ahmed Yussuf Yasin, vice president of the Republic of Somaliland.

Somaliland soldiers and local residents were searching for the pirates in an effort to free the hostages. Yasin said Yasin said he believed the hostages were either French or German.

Earlier this month the UN Security Council gave nations new powers to pursue pirates into the waters off Somalia in an effort to combat a new spate of hijackings off the Horn of Africa.

The Gulf of Aden in particular has become a treacherous stretch for shipping in recent months, with more than two dozen pirate attacks reported since the beginning of 2008, according to the International Maritime Bureau. Nine of those have been successful hijackings, the bureau said.

**Australians among world’s worst greenhouse polluters**

Canberra, 24 June — An Australian government document showed on Tuesday that Australians are among the world’s worst greenhouse-gas polluters by emitting 28 tons of greenhouse-gases per person every year.

Australian Conservation Foundation climate change program manager Tony Mohr said the figure was among one of the highest in the world, even higher than the United States, Japan and the Western European countries.

Mohr said the international community will look at Australia’s high per capita emissions, and expect serious cuts as part of a global effort to tackle climate change.

The government’s National Greenhouse Gas Inventory, 2006, said the “magnitude” of per capita emissions was caused by Australia’s reliance on coal-fired electricity, high historical levels of land clearing, and large resource and agricultural industries.
Iraq qualifies six more firms for oil contracts

BAGHDAD, 24 June — Up to 41 foreign oil firms are now qualified to participate in Iraq’s coming licensing round for oil and gas contracts, the Iraqi Oil Ministry said on Sunday.

Six more state-owned oil companies are added to 35 companies qualified in mid-April to won rights to bid tenders to develop oil and gas fields in Iraq, a source of the oil ministry media office told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

“The new oil firms are from Algeria, Angola, Pakistan, Thailand, Turkey and Vietnam,” the source added.

In April, Iraq qualified 35 companies out of 120 applicants around the world. The qualification was in accordance to criteria put by the Iraqi Oil Ministry.

The ministry will sign deals with the qualified oil companies to bid for oil and gas service contracts in all Iraq’s regions soon, the source said.

Early in January, Iraqi oil ministry asked international oil companies to register with the newly set up Contracts and Licensing Office of the ministry and set 18 February the deadline for receiving registration documentation.

Rocket attacks on NATO bases kill four Afghans

KABUL, 24 June — Rocket attacks on the bases of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in eastern Afghanistan claimed the lives of four Afghan civilians, a statement of the alliance released here Sunday said.

“Four Afghan civilians were killed in two separate rocket attacks on ISAF bases in Khost Province today,” the statement added.

The first rocket attack, according to the statement occurred shortly after midnight when 13 rockets were fired from inside Afghanistan, killing one civilian. The second attack of five rockets the statement added was launched from inside Pakistan around dusk. —MNA/Xinhua

Congo’s army has killed 29 militia in northeast

KINSHASA, 24 June — Congo’s Army has killed 29 militia fighters in operations since late May against a local militia group and its Rwandan Hutu rebel allies in the country’s northeast, a senior Army officer said on Sunday.

Four government soldiers were also killed in the clashes and a number of others were wounded, General Jean-Claude Kifwa, the Army commander in Orientale province of Democratic Republic of Congo, told UN-sponsored Radio Okapi.

The Army had launched the operations to force militia fighters known as Mai-Mai in gold-rich Batwa-wende territory, around 260 kilometres (160 miles) northwest of the provincial capital Kisangani, to disband or join the Army. —MNA/Xinhua

US troops kill six Shiite militiamen in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 24 June — US troops killed six suspected Iranian-backed Shiite militiamen and wounded another in eastern Baghdad, the US military said on Sunday. In a statement issued by the US military, US soldiers on Friday sporadically fought “Special Groups” members trying to plant roadside bombs in Baghdad al-Jadida neighborhood, or New Baghdad.

Earlier in the day, the US military said its troops detained a suspected “Special Groups” member who believed to be one of the most wanted criminals during a predawn raid on his hideout in Bayaa neighbourhood in southern Baghdad on Saturday. —MNA/Xinhua
Singapore prevents profiteering for hiring foreign workers

SINGAPORE, 24 June—Singapore’s Ministry of Manpower (MOM) announced Friday that it will introduce new rules to bar employers from receiving payment for employing foreign workers, and to prohibit employment agencies from offering payment to employers.

The new rules “seek to better safeguard the well-being of foreign workers in Singapore. They also prevent labour market distortions”, said the ministry in a statement.

Starting from 14 July, employers cannot receive payment - whether monetary or in kind - as consideration for employing a Work Permit or S Pass holder.

Employers will also be prohibited from recovering employment-related expenses such as the levy and for employing a Work Permit or S Pass holder.

A new licence condition will also be introduced to prohibit employment agencies from offering payment to employers, in exchange for hiring foreign workers through them.—Xinhua

Hamas says US involved in inter-Palestinian crisis

GAZA, 24 June—Islamic Hamas movement on Sunday accused the United States of being involved in internal Palestinian differences by supporting a party against another.

“The US administration is not interested in any Palestinian agreement and it pushes the situation towards collision,” Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said in a statement faxed to the media.

The statement was made in response to the US Consulate General in Jerusalem which praised the graduation of a group of Palestinian forces loyal to President Mahmoud Abbas of Fatah movement.

The Consulate General has reportedly said that the graduation of these forces aims at supporting the legitimate Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and fighting the terrorism in the region.

“This statement was an evidence of the US involvement,” Abu Zuhri said. He added that these statements “explain the background” of the fighting between Hamas and Fatah which ended in June last year with Hamas taking over Gaza and ousting Fatah.

Abu Zuhri continued that the statements also “emphasize the nature of the security forces work in West Bank; crushing the groups of resistances”.

When pro-Abbas forces lost Gaza, they received more support to strengthen their role in the West Bank in order to maintain the territory, he said.—Xinhua

Sarkozy criticizes Israel for settlements expansion

JERUSALEM, 24 June—Visiting French President Nicolas Sarkozy criticized on Sunday the expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the construction in east Jerusalem.

“You have made some bad decisions, like the expansion of settlements and east Jerusalem, where the construction is not good for Israel,” said Sarkozy during his visit to Israeli President Shimon Peres’ residence in Jerusalem.

Sarkozy and his wife, Carla Bruni, arrived in Israel late Sunday afternoon for a three-day trip as guests of Peres.

“The best and only guarantee for the state of Israel is an independent, democratic Palestinian state at its side,” he added.

Peres responded that “there are no disagreements between us on the issue of the Palestinian state and the settlements. However, we evacuated many settlements in Gaza and the unfortunate result is Hamas firing at civilians, firing missiles at them”.

All Items From Xinhua News Agency

Saudi energy summit closed on Sunday

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia, 24 June—The energy summit staged in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to curb rocketing oil prices, is closed on Sunday.

Leaders and ministers from the 36 nations agreed that “the transparency and regulation of financial markets should be improved through measures to capture more data on index fund activity and to examine cross-exchange interactions in the crude market”.

The increasing oil prices have hit almost 135 US dollars per barrel on Friday, which affects consumers and economies across the United States, Europe and much of the world. Many countries have experienced social unrest and economic turmoil.

As the world’s top oil exporter, Saudi Arabia has been under intense pressure from the US and other oil consumers to increase its crude output to help rein in the oil price hike. Saudi King Abdullah said at the opening ceremony of the Jeddah oil meeting that his country has increased output to 9.7 million barrels a day and it is willing to increase oil output if necessary.—Xinhua

Israel reopens crossings, allows goods, fuels into Gaza

GAZA, 24 June—After 72 hours of implementing a truce between Hamas and Israel, the latter on Sunday reopened two borders crossing points and allowed food and fuels into the territory, Palestinian security sources said. The sources said that at 9:00 am local time (0600 GMT), the Israeli Army reopened the crossings between Gaza and Israel and allowed products of basic food supplies coming into Gaza, where most of them was not allowed in for one year.

Witnesses said Israel opened the Sofa Crossing on the border between southeast Gaza Strip and Israel, adding that goods are left on the ground 500 metres far from the crossing.—Xinhua

A file photo shows People surf the Internet in Beijing in 2007. Internet users should soon be able to use new domain names such as love, paris or bank if one of the world wide web’s biggest shakeups is approved this week as expected by the web regulator ICANN.—INTERNET

In this image released by Miss Universe LP, LLLP, Miss Peru 2008 Karol Castillo kisses a child as she visits the Tam Binh Center Orphanage in Ho Chi Minh City on 23 June, 2008.—INTERNET

A member of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) search and rescue carries a survivor in San Fernando town in Romblon province, central Philippines on 23 June, 2008 after the passenger ferry MV Princess of Stars capsized off the Sibuyan Island, central Philippines.—INTERNET

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 25 June, 2008
 Feeling sad and glad simultaneously

Sitagu Sayadaw Dr Ashin Ānissara

A cyclone with the wind speed of about 200 kilometres per hour ravaged the lower part of Ayeyawady Division and some areas in Yangon Division on 2 and 3 May 2008, leaving millions of people homeless, and over 130,000, dead. It went down in the annals of the nation’s history as the most destructive natural disaster.

I wish I would never hear of such an untold misery again in my life. Moreover, I wish I would never witness various forms of terrible loss of wealth, health, relatives, virtue and faith in the next existences. And I wish any of the worldly people would never suffer such forms of loss.

I did not face the violent catastrophe firsthand. However, when I learnt about and witnessed the sufferings of the victims, members of the Sangha and people, I happened to share a variety of hardships and adversities the victims were suffering. I did not know how heart-rending I felt. Therefore, I thought over which ways I should take to relieve their sufferings. I held a meeting with members of the Sitagu missionary association on 8 May night.

The meeting reached an agreement to lay down a policy of “Compassion in action” so as to build “Compassionate Common Platform” and to march forward along the path. We would have to translate Mano Kamma Karuna (compassion) into Kayakam Karuna (deeds). It was required of those capable in that regard to equip themselves with willingness of contributing towards the tasks. Lacking capability and skills, in spite of eagerness, volunteers would not be able to carry out the tasks effectively. So, I sent monk disciples and lay persons of Sitagu missionary association to the storm-affected areas.

Sitagu forward relief camp was opened at Sitagu Dhamma Vihara monastery in Kun-thi-chaung village, Bogale Township on 9 May. And details of our plan were made public internationally. We invited a member of the Sangha and people to participate in the relief work.

We renovated two government hospitals in Kadonkani and Amar villages, and donated all necessary medicines and medical equipment. Arrangements have been made to provide donations worth about 50,000 US dollars to the people's hospital in Bogale. The donations Sitagu missionary group had donated up to 9 June were K 134.4 million to 1344 monasteries in six townships, 146,600 CI sheets at the rate of 100 sheets to a monastery, more than 10,000 bags of rice to 1344 monasteries and over 900 villages, clothes, and 300 truck loads of aluminium pots and containers and food.

And Sitagu missionary association had donated medical equipment such as a ultrasound machine, ECG monitoring system, ECG machine, anesthesia machine, diathermy, autoclave, surgical instrument set, defibrillator, electric generator, oxygen concentrator, medicine trolley, dressing trolley, instrument trolley, 16 patient beds, and 16 bedside lockers to Bogale Township People’s Hospital; and operation bed, operation light, anesthesia machine, diathermy, ECG machine, autoclave, surgical instrument set, electronic generator, and patient beds and beside tables to Amar Township People’s Hospital.

We had donated all necessary medical equipment to operation theatre, lab room, and X-ray room of Kadonkani hospital before the natural disaster. Sitagu missionary association again donated a 2000-household-capacity water purifier, ECG machine, cardiac table, medicine trolley, dressing trolley, instrument trolley, labour table, vacuum extractor, foot suction, O2 flowmeter, flower’s bed, and generator (60 KVA).

In donating supplies, Sitagu missionary group gave priority to the religious, education and health affairs. We have chosen primary monastic education schools and government basic education primary schools in remote areas that are in need or that need repair. We are working together as much as we can in the interests of members of the Sangha and people.

In the work of relief and rehabilitation of storm victims, MMA gave medical treatment 34 times with the strength of 46 doctors. All together 21834 people were treated and relief items were provided.
Indian delegation arrives in Yangon

YANGON, 24 June — An Indian delegation headed by Minister of State for Commerce and Power Mr Shri Jairam Ramesh of the Ministry of Commerce of Republic of India arrived here by air on 22 June.

They were welcomed by Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Col Thurein Zaw, departmental heads and Indian Ambassador Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra at the Yangon International Airport.

The guests visited Bago together with Indian Ambassador and paid homage to Shwetharhlaung Buddha Image before their visit to Kambozathadi Golden Palace.

On their arrival at Yangon, the Indian Minister donated US $ 0.2 million to Shwedagon Pagoda to repair destroyed buildings on the precinct of the pagoda.

Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung accepted the donation and presented replica of the pagoda to the Indian Minister who offered flowers, water and lights to the pagoda, afterwards.

Indian delegation on tour of Sittway

YANGON, 24 June — A delegation led by Minister of State for Commerce and Power of the Republic of India Mr Shri Jairam Ramesh arrived in Sittway, Rakhine State, by Myanmar Airways yesterday morning.

They were welcomed at Sittway Airport by Secretary of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council U Ye Naing Aung and officials.

A briefing on multipurpose transport in Kaladan River was held at the Sittway Hotel. Present on the discussion were Director-General U Khin Soe of Companies Investment Department under Ministry of National Planning and Economic Department, Director-General U Soe Myint of Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River System under the Ministry of Transport and departmental officials, Mr Shri Jairam Ramesh and party.

Director-General U Soe Myint and General Manager for Myanmar Port Authority U Cho Than Maung explained the salient points on multipurpose-transport project in Kaladan River and replied to queries raised by the guests.

Next, Mr Shri Jairam Ramesh and party viewed the site chosen for implementation of the project.

Afterwards, Secretary of Rakhine State PDC U Ye Naing Aung hosted a luncheon to the visiting guests.

Next, the visiting guests viewed river by boat. They also visited Rakhine State Museum and paid homage to Lawkananda Pagoda.

The Indian delegation and party arrived back here in the evening. — MNA

Indian delegation led by Mr Shri Jairam Ramesh visits Rakhine State culture museum in Sittway.

MNA

More relief aids arrive at Ygn Int’l Airport

YANGON, 24 June — The international community has been donating relief supplies to regions severely hit by the storm. Relief supplies weighing 74.58 tons donated by Malaysia based ICRC and Red Crescent and 14.96 tons donated by Spanish Red Cross Society arrived at Yangon International Airport today. — MNA

Myanmar, India sign cooperation agreements

NAY PYI TAW, 24 June — Indian delegation led by Minister of State for Commerce and Power Mr Shri Jairam Remesh called on Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha at the ministry here today and they frankly discussed matters on bilateral cooperation in economic and trade sectors.

After the meeting, the two sides signed the economic cooperation agreements at the meeting hall of the ministry.

The Bilateral Investment Promotion Agreement was signed by Minister U Soe Tha and Indian Minister Mr Shri Jairam Remesh.

A credit line agreement between the Exim Bank of India and the Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank for $ 64 million for financing three 230 kV transmission lines in Myanmar were signed by Managing Director of Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank U Than Yi and Mr Sunil Trikha of the Exim Bank.

The Agreement for providing the banking arrangement was signed by managing directors of Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank and Myanmar Investment and Trade Bank and Mr Ashok Rai of United Bank of India.

The ceremony to sign the agreements were also attended by Deputy Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Col Thurein Zaw, Deputy Minister Mr Industry-2 Lt-Col Khin Maung Kyaw, Deputy Minister for Electric Power No2 Brig-Gen Win Myint, Deputy Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin, President of the Central Bank of Myanmar U Than Nyein, Indian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra and officials concerned.

The Indian delegation arrived at Nay Pyi Taw Airport at noon today and they were welcomed by Deputy Minister for NPED Col Thurein Zaw and officials concerned.

Minister of State for Commerce and Power Mr Shri Jairam Remesh also called on Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein and discussed matters on promotion of bilateral trade.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun and directors-general, managing-directors and officials concerned under the Ministry of Commerce.

Mr Shri Jairam Remesh also called on Minister for Electric Power No. 1 Col Zaw Min at the latter’s office here this evening and discussed matters related to hydel projects in Myanmar.

Also present at the meeting were Deputy Minister for Electric Power No. 1 U Myo Myint, directors-general of the enterprises and departments under the ministry and India Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Bhaskar Kumar Mitra.

MNA
NAY PYI TAW, 24 June — General Thein Sein, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, received Ms Noeleen Heyzer, UN Under Secretary General and UNESCAP Executive Secretary, at Zeyathiri Beikman on Konyinttha, Yangon, this evening.

Together with the Prime Minister at the call were Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, Director-General of Government’s Office Col Thant Shin, and Deputy Director-General U Soe Win of Protocol Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
Prime Minister inspects construction of durable…

(from page 1)

In his address, the Prime Minister said that the sown acreage of Ayeyawady Division damaged in the storm was insignificant if compared with those of the whole division, adding that the government is providing storm-hit regions with all the necessary assistance including power tillers and paddy seeds.

He stressed the need for officials to make field trips right down to respective regions and give a helping hand to local people so that they can put all acres under crops and boost production.

With the assistance of the government, the respective companies are building durable houses of wooden type for storm victims, he said and spoke of the need for officials to impart knowledge of agriculture to local people to grow vegetables in their houses’ compounds so that they can consume fresh vegetables and save money as well.

Next, the Prime Minister by car inspected the conditions of Mawlamyinegyun that has returned to normal.

The Prime Minister and party left Mawlamyinegyun by helicopter for Kyondah village in Dedaye Township, and inspected conditions of Bogale and Pyapon, progress of ploughing fields and nurturing paddy saplings for cultivation of monsoon paddy.

In meeting with the teachers and students, the Prime Minister asked about the pass rate of matriculation students, saying that teachers are required to study constantly so that they will master the subjects they teach; that it is also needed to nurture and guide the students to become brilliant citizens who abide by the disciplines and who cherish the nation and the people; and that students on their part are to try hard to be outstanding and reliable citizens.

Next, the Prime Minister inspected the construction of durable houses with the donations of Eden Groups Co Ltd to provide shelter for homeless victims of Kyondah village, and the contribution of social organization members to the programme.

Women’s Affairs Organizations, Maternal and Child Welfare Associations, Red Cross and Fire Brigades, and the contribution of regional and the people; and that students on their part are to try hard to be outstanding and reliable citizens.

The Prime Minister cordially greeted volunteers from social organizations and workers.

The Prime Minister and party left Kyondah village by helicopter. On the way, they looked into the conditions of Dedaye, Kungyangon and Dalla townships, ploughing fields for growing monsoon paddy, nurturing of paddy saplings, cultivation of paddy, and vessels plying along the Yangon port. They arrived back at Yangon in the afternoon.

Now, companies concerned are building 16 x 20’ houses with post shoes, roofed with CI sheets, floor with timber and covered with timber and bamboo mats for homeless victims. Well-wishers Htoo Trading Co is building 116 units in Kyechanguyi village in Bogale Township; Diamond Mercury Co, 108 units with the donations of Ngwe Hsin Co in Setsan village in Bogale Township; Dagon Construction Co, 124 units with the donations of CB Bank Chairman U Khin Maung Aye in Kadonkani village for homeless victims from Kyunthaya village; and, Managing Director U Chit Khang of Eden Groups Co Ltd reported on the programme to construct and donate 65 units to the victims.

He also inspected the construction of 16 x 20 housing units. Managing Director U Chit Khang of Eden Groups Co Ltd reported on progress of reconstruction tasks in Dedaye Township reported on progress of reconstruction tasks and measures for regional development.

Next, the Prime Minister asked the programme members to the programme, saying that teachers are required to study constantly so that they will master the subjects they teach; that it is also needed to nurture and guide the students to become brilliant citizens who abide by the disciplines and who cherish the nation and the people; and that students on their part are to try hard to be outstanding and reliable citizens.

Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min who is supervising reconstruction tasks in Dedaye Township reported on progress of reconstruction tasks and measures for regional development.

The Prime Minister and party left Kyondah village by helicopter. On the way, they looked into the conditions of Dedaye, Kungyangon and Dalla townships, ploughing fields for growing monsoon paddy, nurturing of paddy saplings, cultivation of paddy, and vessels plying along the Yangon port. They arrived back at Yangon in the afternoon.

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Billboard erected to welcome Myanmar Women’s Day

YANGON, 24 June – A billboard hailing Myanmar Women’s Day which falls on 3 July was set up in front of the City Hall in Kyauktada Township today.

Vice-President of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Daw Khin Thet Htay unveiled the billboard.

The ceremony to unveil the billboard was also attended by secretariat members of MWAF, leaders of work groups under MWAF, the patron and members of Yangon Division WAO, social organizations, members of township Union Solidarity and Development Association in Yangon West District and departmental officials altogether 1,000. — MNA

ASEAN Roundtable on Post Nargis Joint Assessment for Response, Recovery and Reconstruction held

YANGON, 23 June – ASEAN Roundtable on Post Nargis Joint Assessment for Response, Recovery and Reconstruction was held at Chatrium Hotel on Natmauk Road here this morning.

Present were Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Surin Pitsuwan, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP Ms Noeline Heyzer, Chairman of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, officials of TCG, Ambassadors of ASEAN nations to Myanmar and ASEAN dialogue partner countries, Korea, China and Japan, embassy staff, diplomats and delegates of Bangladesh, Germany, Italy, France, Britain, the US, Egypt, Switzerland, Czech, Saudi Arabia and Australia, UN Resident Coordinator and resident representatives of UN Agencies, international social organizations and officials.

Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Surin Pitsuwan and Under Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of UN-ESCAP Ms Noeline Heyzer delivered speeches.

Next, Chairman of (TCG) Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu said the roundtable was held to exchange experiences and review the devastating effect of cyclone Nargis. The death toll is 84,537 with 53,836 people missing and 19,359 injured due to the storm.

Although the extent of damages caused by the cyclone was unprecedented, the government was able to react very fast and attended to the requirements of the people in the aftermath of the storm. The National Disaster Preparedness Central Committee chaired by the Prime Minister assumes the overall coordination of the Nargis response. The ministers and the deputy ministers are designated to be the focal point.

A total of K 27.6 billion was spent on emergency assistance so far. An important task of TCG is to conduct a credible assessment and to formulate a recovery plan. Therefore, TCG meetings are held regularly.

Two advance assessment teams were deployed to the storm-affected areas on 5-7 June. The ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Teams comprise experts from Myanmar government and the UN. After the storm, the data collection phase of Post Nargis Joint Assessment has now been concluded.

The objective of today’s roundtable is to provide the government with initial findings from the Post Nargis Joint Assessment and other recommendations from specific sectoral interventions. The roundtable will also present ASEAN and other countries’ experiences. Considering these recommendations, the ASEAN Humanitarian Task Force will intensify the momentum and the roundtable will also provide the government with recommendations towards more effective relief and recovery efforts.

Next, the panel 1 of the roundtable of preliminary findings from the Post-Nargis Joint Assessment was presided over by Chairman of (TCG) Deputy Minister U Kyaw Thu. Dr Piji Pujjono, ASEAN member of TCD reported on post Nargis assessment, Mr Richard Blewitt and Mr Yves-Kim Chea on relief and early recovery and Mr Raja Rehan Arshed on damage and loss.

Those present at the roundtable took part in the discussions.

In the afternoon, the panel 2 of the roundtable of Countries’ experiences in managing response and preparation for recovery was presided over by Mr Robert Chua Hian Kong, Ambassador of Singapore to Myanmar. Mr Heru Prasetyo and Mr Suprayoga Hadi of Indonesia, Mr Maltree Jangkraijug of Thailand, Mr K H Masud Shiddiqui of Bangladesh and Lt-Gen Nadeem Ahmed of Pakistan discussed the experiences.

The panel 3 of Panel Discussion on Post-Nargis Strategic Next Steps was held. The session was presided over by Secretary-General of ASEAN Dr Surin Pitsuwan.

UN Humanitarian Coordinator Mr Daniel Baker reported on continuing relief imperatives, UNDP/UN Resident Coordinator Mr Bishow Parajuli on early recovery aspects and ASEAN expert Mr Raja Rehan Arshed on possible strategies for recovery and reconstruction and UN Assistant Secretary-General (Retd) U Tun Myat took part in the discussions.

Those present took part in the discussions. — MNA
Australia says uranium sales to India may happen

Canberra, 24 June — Australia said on Monday it would consider uranium sales to India if New Delhi was able to strike a landmark nuclear pact with the United States and satisfy international concerns about safeguards.

The new centre-left Labour government was closely watching so-called “123” negotiations, although it would not sell yellowcake to countries that had not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Foreign Minister Stephen Smith said after meeting his Indian counterpart Pranab Mukherjee in Canberra.

“If and when the 123 Agreement gets to either the International Atomic Energy Agency or the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Australia will then give consideration to what its attitude to that agreement is,” Smith told reporters.

Australia has 40 per cent of the world’s known reserves of uranium and exports to 36 countries. India has been lobbying Canberra for access to it, despite not having agreed to the NPT. India is trying to convince the 45-member NSG, including Australia, to back a waiver on trade with non-NPT members to allow sale of nuclear material, as well as strike agreement with the IAEA on safeguards.

A Turkish police officer inspects the site of the railway accident area in Gaziantep Province recently. Ten people were killed in Turkey when a freight train rammed into a minibus passing a level crossing despite warnings to stop, revising down an earlier toll of 11 dead.—INTERNET

Iran, Russia to jointly produce passenger airplanes

Tehran, 24 June — Teheran and Moscow have reached preliminary consensus on joint production of 100 passenger airliners of Tu-204 and Tu-214 in Iran, Iran’s English-language Press TV reported on Sunday.

“The manufacturing of Russia’s updated Tu-204 and Tu-214 passenger aircraft in Iran was put on the agenda after Russian experts studied the technological capabilities and human resources of Iran’s Aviation Industries Organization (IAIO),” IAIO Deputy Executive Director Ali Akbar Ghazi Moradi was quoted as saying.

Russia and Iran are holding talks on the project to build the medium-haul 210-seat liners in the next 10 years for Iran, he said, adding that the countries were also discussing the spare parts production, test flights, and the construction of a maintenance center in the country.

“The agreement between Iran and Russia will be signed in the near future,” Ghazi Moradi said.

Hamas leader denies deployment of Arab forces

Gaza, 24 June—Hamas leader in Gaza Ismail Haneya on Sunday denied that the ceasefire deal with Israel comprises the entry of Arab forces to the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. “No one has officially spoken about Arab forces in Gaza Strip and there is no Arab state thinking of sending troops to Gaza,” said Haneya, who has a government ruling Gaza despite being fired by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

Moreover, he added that Hamas “doesn’t accept Arab forces” to prevent friction with Israel, but “welcomes Arab forces helping the Palestinian people in their liberation”. A few days ago, an Israeli newspaper reported that the Egyptian-brokered ceasefire may include the deployment of multinational Arab forces in Gaza in its final stages. —MNA/Xinhua

Israel arrests nine Palestinians in West Bank

Ramallah, 24 June—Israeli forces arrested nine Palestinians during raids in West Bank, Palestinian and Israeli sources said on Monday.

The detentions took place in Nablus, Ramallah, and Qabata, the Palestinian sources said. Israeli sources said that nine wanted Palestinians were arrested and taken to interrogation.

The West Bank, where President Mahmoud Abbas forces control, is not included in a six-month ceasefire which took place in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip on Thursday. —MNA/Xinhua

Niger Tuareg rebels seize four French uranium workers

Namaey, 24 June—Tuareg-led rebels in Niger seized four French employees of a French-run uranium mine on Sunday in an abduction they said showed the country’s government could not guarantee the safety of foreign mining operations.

Niger’s government said the four, who worked for the French nuclear group Areva at its Cominak mine at Arlit in the north of the West African country, were kidnapped by “armed bandits”, the term it usually uses for the rebels. The rebel Niger Justice Movement (MNJ) said it carried out the kidnapping as a warning to foreign mining companies. It said it was responding to a public pledge made by Niger’s government earlier this month that it would provide military protection to foreign investments in uranium mining and oil. —MNA/Reuters

Labourers pluck tea leaves in a tea plantation at Shipaidura village, about 40 km (25 miles) north of the northeastern hill resort of Darjeeling, on 23 June, 2008.—INTERNET

India, France to co-produce surface-to-air missiles

New Delhi, 24 June— India and France plan to co-produce surface-to-air missiles (SAM) Maitri, which will be offered to the Indian Army for replacing the near-obsolete Russian SAMs, the Hindu newspaper reported Monday.

“We have been assured of support at the highest political level by French President Nicolas Sarkozy after he discussed the project with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during the former’s visit to New Delhi in January this year,” said Antoine Bouvier, chief executive officer of Europe’s MBDA, one of the world’s largest missile manufacturers.

TheMBDA had initiated discussions with India’s missile manufacturer Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) and the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) in November 2005 on a completely new missile version. The next step is joint development with the DRDO and production by the BDL some of which can also be earmarked for export, said Bouvier. —MNA/Xinhua

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Iraqi officials say British captives are alive

London, 23 June—Five Britons who were kidnapped in Baghdad more than a year ago are still alive, Iraq’s most senior security official told the BBC on Saturday.

Mowaffak al-Rubaie, Iraq’s national security adviser, said authorities had “very good, strong intelligence telling us they are alive”, the BBC said. “And we roughly know the area where they are,” Rubaie added. “But we don’t want to be aggressive in our approach, not to risk their lives.” The Britons—a computer instructor and his four bodyguards—were seized by a Shi’ite militant group from inside an Iraqi Finance Ministry building in a raid in Baghdad in May 2007.

There was no news of the men until a video featuring one of the hostages was released last December. It included a statement from his captors threatening to kill him unless Britain pulled its troops out of Iraq. A second video was released in February, this time featuring a second hostage who appealed for the release of nine Iraqis hostage who appealed for the release of nine Iraqis in return for the Britons’ freedom.— MNA/Reuters

Norway, India to cooperate on higher education

Stockholm, 24 June—Norway and India will enhance their cooperation in higher education, according to reports reaching here from Oslo on Saturday.

The two countries signed an agreement on the cooperation this week in Oslo and the specific collaboration topics will be clarified in further follow-up between the countries, the Norwegian Ministry of Higher Education and Research said in a statement. Cooperation in science and technology education will be given priority by Norway. It is important that collaboration in education is linked with that in the field of research, especially at the master and PhD levels, the Ministry added.

India is among the most important countries to collaborate with in the global knowledge society and the agreement could have important consequences for higher educational institutions and students in Norway, the Norwegian Minister of Higher Education and Research Tora Aasland said in the statement.

MNA/Xinhua
**“Lap band” surgery improves health of obese teens**

NEW YORK, 24 June — A type of minimally invasive weight-loss surgery called gastric banding not only helps morbidly obese teenagers lose a substantial amount of weight, but also leads to healthy changes in blood sugar and blood fats, a small study shows.

Teenagers who are extremely obese are at risk of type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome—a cluster of heart disease risk factors that includes high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar and abnormal cholesterol levels. Previous studies have shown that gastric banding, or “lap band” surgery, performed using laparoscopic, or key-hole techniques, is a safe and effective way for morbidly obese teens to lose weight.

“Our goal with the lap band in this study was to try to reduce the morbid conditions that we see associated with obesity,” explained Dr. Iliene Fennoy, professor of pediatrics at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. In lap band surgery, surgeons place a silicone band around the upper part of the stomach to create a small pouch that substantially limits the amount of food a person can eat at a time. The band is attached to a port placed just below the skin, which allows doctors to tighten or loosen the band by inflating or deflating a saline-filled balloon that lies inside the band.

**French authorities remain vigilant on bird flu**

PARIS, 24 June — The situation regarding the avian influenza today “is neither better nor worse” compared to a decade ago and French authorities remain as much vigilant as ever before, Didier Houssin, France’s director general for public health, has said.

Houssin, who was speaking on Friday, was addressing reporters on what the government was doing to prepare to fight a possible pandemic, according to the French Press.

In his remarks, the public health general director, who is part of an inter-ministerial delegation on the fight against the avian influenza, was quoted as saying that “no scientific authority had ever said that the flu threat had disappeared”.

“The premise of a possible pandemic is still very much present. We know that there is a possibility of a future return, which means that we should be prepared to handle such an eventuality,” he said, adding that his team was fine-tuning the plan to make it “more and more operational”.

Since 2003, which marked the beginning of the epidemic, 385 cases of avian influenza, including 243 deaths, have been tabulated in 15 countries.

In four grouped-or-clustered human cases, an inter-human transmission has been confirmed, which has notably led to fears of a “humanization of the avian virus”, said Francoise Weber, MNA/Reuters.

**Russia condemns rewriting of World War II history**

BREST (Belarus), 24 June — Russian President Dmitry Medvedev condemned on Sunday what he described as attempts to rewrite wartime history— an attack the Kremlin said was aimed at Ukraine and the three Baltic states.

In a joint declaration marking the 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, Medvedev and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko denounced a “politicized approach to history”.

Their countries “strongly condemn any attempt at rewriting history and revision of the results of World War II”, they said.

Ukraine and the Baltic states Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have challenged Moscow’s view of history, saying their nationals suffered from Soviet as well as Nazi oppression, and a Kremlin spokesman said later the criticism was aimed at them. Meeting in the Belarusian town of Brest, where Nazi forces first crossed the Soviet border on 22 June, 1941, the two leaders denounced a “selective, politicized approach to history should be set against honest, scientific debate”.

MNA/Reuters

**Oil summit to urge financial market transparency**

ALGIERS, 24 June — A draft final communique for Sunday’s summit of energy powers calls for greater financial market transparency and more exchanges of information about oil fundamentals and the actions of investment funds, Algeria’s official APS news agency reported on Saturday.

The agency, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of OPEC, said the document also underlined the need to “take the necessary measures to guarantee the stability and permanence of the energy system and raise refining capacities.”

APS said the draft had been prepared ahead of talks on Sunday in the Saudi city of Jeddah between top officials and policy-makers from the world’s biggest oil producers and consumers, plus the chief executives of leading oil companies. Participants will include OPEC, the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the International Energy Forum (IEF).

Oil prices have more than doubled in a year to almost 140 US dollars a barrel, triggering protests from Brussels to Bangkok over record fuel costs that threaten the world’s economy.

MNA/Reuters

**US gas prices climb to record $4.10; could be peak**

NEW YORK, 24 June — Gasoline is costing US drivers a record 4.10 US dollars per gallon on average, but pump prices may be at a peak and could start to come down, an industry analyst said on Sunday.

That optimism is linked to a pledge by Saudi Arabia to pump more oil in response to consumer countries’ requests, according to Tribby Lundberg, editor of the nationwide Lundberg survey of about 7,000 gas stations.

“I suspect that oil prices have peaked and will flip further because of this news and the physical addition of more oil in the market in July,” Lundberg said. “This gives a strong chance that pump prices are peaking now, or may already have done so.”

A barrel of oil has doubled in price over the past year, stoking inflation, triggering protests from Asia to Europe, and compounding the financial pain of US consumers already grappling with a sagging housing market, job uncertainty and soaring food costs. — MNA/Reuters
SPORTS

Italian Rosetti to referee Euro 2008 final

REGENSBOURG (Switzerland), 24 June — Italian Roberto Rosetti will referee the Euro 2008 final in Vienna on Sunday, organizers UEFA said on Monday. The 40-year-old hospital manager from Turin had mixed feelings when he watched Italy being knocked out of the tournament by Spain 4-2 on penalties after their quarterfinal finished goalless after extra time.

Sunday’s result, however, meant he was eligible to handle the final as only referees whose teams are not taking part can officiate.

“First of all, I’m a supporter of the national team as I have been since I was a little boy. The penalty shootout was a very emotional moment and not very nice for the team,” Rosetti told reporters. — MNA/Reuters

Tactical preview of Germany vs Turkey

BASEL, 24 June — A look at the likely formations, strengths and weaknesses of Germany and Turkey who meet in the semifinal of Euro 2008 at St. Jakob Park on Wednesday (1845 GMT). Germany coach Joachim Loew, back on the bench after his one match banishment to the stands by UEFA, will have to decide whether to stick with the 4-5-1 formation he used against Portugal, or revert to his favoured 4-4-2.

Playing five in midfield meant he could give a much freer role to Michael Ballack, who was devastating in attack. Loew must be tempted to stick with the same strategy. Turkey coach Fatih Terim’s hand will be forced by what players he has available, but is likely to also play 4-4-2 although who fills those positions is the subject of some conjecture because he has so many injuries and suspensions to deal with.

Germany clearly have strengths in every department, but their biggest attribute on Wednesday may well be in their heads. The Germans grow up believing they will reach the later stages, if not the final, of every competition they enter, and are also bound to feel confident playing against a Turkish team severely depleted by absent personnel. — MNA/Reuters

Nalbandian sent packing in first round at Wimbledon

LONDON, 24 June — Former finalist David Nalbandian became the highest seed to perish at Wimbledon on Monday, beaten 6-4, 6-2, 6-4 by Canada’s Frank Dancevic.

The seventh-seeded Argentine, runner-up to Lleyton Hewitt in 2002, looked completely out of sorts, bemoaned time and again by winners flying off Dancevic’s racket. The 95th-ranked Dancevic put Nalbandian out of misery with a booming ace, his 16th of the match.

The defeat condemned the Argentine to his earliest exit from the All England Club. Dancevic will next face American Bobby Reynolds as he bids to reach the third round of a grand slam for the first time. — MNA/Reuters

Zidane tips Deschamps for France job

VIENNA, 24 June — Former France great Zinedine Zidane tipped his 1998 World Cup winning captain Didier Deschamps on Sunday to become coach of the national team.

His comments came amid media speculation Raymond Domenech could be sacked as coach by the French Football Federation when it meets on July 3 to assess the country’s disappointing group stage exit from Euro 2008.

Zidane, who retired after the 2006 World Cup, was initially reluctant to discuss such a sensitive issue, pointing out Domenech’s future was not his decision.

“It will be decided on the 3rd of July and we’ll see whether or not there is going to be a new coach,” he told a news conference.

But he later added: “It’s true someone who could replace the current coach is clearly Didier Deschamps.” — MNA/Reuters

Cink holds on to triumph at River Highlands

NEW YORK, 24 June — American Stewart Cink held his nerve to win his first PGA Tour title in almost four years with a one-shot victory at the Travelers Championship in Cromwell, Connecticut, on Sunday.

Two ahead overnight, Cink surrendered the outright lead after seven holes at the rain-softened TPC River Highlands but birdied three of the last 10 for a closing three-under-par 67.

Cink, who had not won since the 2004 WGC-NEC Invitational, stayed ahead of the chasing pack with birdies on 13 and 15 and got up and down from behind the green to save par at the last for an 18-under total of 262. “I can’t believe it was this long since (winning) the last one,” a smiling Cink told reporters after clinching his fifth PGA Tour title and a winner’s cheque for 1.08 million US dollars. — MNA/Reuters

Ageless Lehmann proves doubters wrong

TENESO (Switzerland), 24 June — Germans worried that Jens Lehmann was too old, too slow and too unreliable for Euro 2008 but the 38-year-old keeper has proved that reports of his decline were wildly overplayed.

Lehmann looked so distracted in Germany’s final two matches ahead of the tournament that he became an obvious target.

“I’m going to stay standing up and give you all more surface area to aim at,” he said to the assembled media when he walked in for his first news conference at the team’s training base.

It is clear enough why the goalkeeper was the big worry for fans, reporters and even the coaches.

Lehmann lost his place in the Arsenal team last season, was without a club to go to and came into the tournament desperately short of the sharpness that only comes from playing regularly. — MNA/Reuters

UAE squeeze into last round of World Cup qualifiers

Al Ain (United Arab Emirates), 24 June — Ismail Matar scored with 10 minutes remaining to send the United Arab Emirates into the final round of World Cup qualifiers after a tense 3-1 defeat by Syria on Sunday.

Matar’s penalty proved decisive and ended the hopes of the unheralded Syrians, who were considered one of the weakest teams in qualifying after advancing from the preliminaries for the first time.

Syria’s win put them level with their opponents on points and goals scored but the heart-breaking penalty added one more to their goals conceded column and pushed UAE into the last 10. — MNA/Reuters

Djokovic moves through after hiccup

LONDON, 24 June — Third seed Novak Djokovic moved safely through to the second round of Wimbledon on Monday, beating German journeyman Michael Berrer 7-5, 2-6, 6-3, 6-0.

The Serb edged a tight first set, breaking the Berrer serve at 6-3 only to lose five games in a row in the second set as Berrer briefly threatened a first-day shock.

Australian Open winner Djokovic, seeded to play five-times champion Roger Federer in the semi-finals this year, quickly regained control with some classy tennis.

After taking the third set with a single break of serve he swept through the fourth in style against his flagging opponent to set up an eye-catching second round with former world number one Marat Safin. — MNA/Reuters

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Eight shot and burned in Guyana diamond mine

GEORGETOWN, 24 June—Unknown assailants shot up to eight people and burned the bodies at a remote diamond mining camp in Guyana, the Prime Minister said on Monday.

Guyana, an English-speaking South American country, has struggled to contain violence by criminal gangs that sometimes take refuge in the mineral-rich eastern jungles popular with informal miners seeking gold and diamonds.

“It’s almost like a crema,” Prime Minister Samuel Hinds told Reuters, adding it was not yet clear when the victims were killed. Initial forensic checks of the skeletal remains indicate as many as eight people died in the camp, he said.

The government said it had learned of the destruction of the small diamond camp on Saturday and police were investigating the killings.

Pakistan finds new bird flu outbreak

ISLAMABAD, 24 June—Pakistan confirmed a new outbreak of avian flu in a poultry farm in northwestern Pakistan, culling some 2,000 chickens, local media reported on Monday.

Local Livestock and Dairy Development Department and the World Health Organization (WHO) officials said tests conducted in Islamabad laboratory proved the presence of deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu.

The virus was detected in Hamid poultry farm in Swabi district of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) after the owner of the farm informed that 4,000 chickens died in the past days, The News newspaper said.

The remaining 2,000 chickens were culled after the confirmation of bird flu outbreak. Another poultry farm was also sealed.

Zambia gears up to improve food security

LUSAKA, 24 June—The Zambian Government has put in place a national agriculture policy (NAP) to facilitate and support the development of a sustainable and competitive agricultural sector to ensure food security at national and household levels, Minister of Agriculture and competitive agricultural sector to assure food security.

She said that the Ministry of Agriculture regards the sector as an important instrument in the socio-economic development of the country in a speech read for her at the official opening of the Chongwe District commercial show on Lusaka on Saturday, according to Zambia News and Information Services.

WEATHER

Tuesday, 24 June, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30hr MST:

Duration of observations recorded at 09:30hr MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Chin State, lower Sagaing, Magway and Yangon Divisions, scattered in Shan, Rakhine and Kayah States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay, Bago and Ayeyawady Divisions and widespread in the remaining States and Divisions. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were CoColdian (2.20) inches, Mogok and Kawthoung (1.54) inches each, Khanti and Gwa (1.46) inches each, Loolin (1.38) inches, Kyakkyaw (1.30) inches and Pathem (1.26) inches.

Maximum temperature on 23-6-2008 was 92°F. Minimum temperature on 24-6-2008 was 72°F. Relative humidity at (09.30) hours MST on 24-6-2008 was 96%. Total sunshine hours on 23-6-2008 was (5.3) hour (approx.).

Rainfall on 24-6-2008 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, (Nil) at KabA-Aye and (Nil) at Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2008 was (380.07) inches at Mingaladon, (47.32) inches at KabA-Aye and (58.03) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (6) mph from South at (16:30) hours MST on 23-6-2008.

Bay inference: Monsoon is moderate to strong in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

Thundershowers will be widespread in Mon, Kayin States and Taninthayi Division, fairly widespread in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, upper Sagaing, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady Divisions and isolated to scattered in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

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

Forecast valid until evening of 25-6-2008: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Mon, Kayin States and Taninthayi Division, fairly widespread in Kachin, Shan and Rakhine States, upper Sagaing, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady Divisions and isolated to scattered in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast valid until evening of 25-6-2008: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).
Make donations to the storm victims

- Everybody may make donations freely.
- Everybody may make donations to any person or any area.

However, wellwishers are urged to avoid unsystematic donations and acts that may tarnish the image of the nation and its people.

- Certain internal and external anti-government elements, self-centred persons and unscrupulous elements are now seeking their self-interests by sending to the foreign news agencies stories about relief and rehabilitation work they have made up and shot on video.
- Storm victims are hereby warned to remain vigilant with nationalistic spirit against the deceptions of the self-centred persons and unscrupulous elements.

Witness may inform about misappropriation of internal and international relief funds and supplies

Anyone may dial the following phone numbers of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement if he witnesses or knows that the cash assistance and relief supplies donated from abroad and at home to the storm victims are kept for self-interest, traded, used for particular persons and organizations, or misappropriated for other purposes.

Head of Office Ph: 067 404021 and 067 404022
Deputy Head of Office Ph: 09 860 1002

Schools opened in Kaingthoung Village

YANGON, 24 June—Affiliated Basic Education Middle School and Primary School of Kaingthoung Village, Pyinsalu town, Labutta Township in Ayeyawady Division have already been opened on 16 June. So far, a total of 485 students—345 primary students and 140 middle school students—are attending classes at the two schools.

Ywale Chaung Village gets Red Cross Society supplies

YANGON, 24 June—Members of Mawlamyinegyun Township Red Cross Society provided supplies to 122 households and six orphans in Ywale Chaung Village of Shaukchaung Village-tract in Mawlamyinegyun Township this morning.

Supplies provided to every household were kitchen utensils such as plate, spoon, fork, knife, cake of soap, pair of slipper, bottled water, mosquito net, sugar, ovaltin and iodized salt. Two tarpsulins were also donated to the primary school in the village.—MNA

Health talks in Mawlamyinegyun

YANGON, 24 June—A health educational talks sponsored by Township Health Department was held at the post-primary school in Mawlamyinegyun Township on 22 June.

Doctors gave lectures on dengue fever, injection of vaccines and prevention of diarrhoea.

Township Women’s Affairs Organization presented text books and other stationery, bottles of water and packages of food to the school. —MNA

Reconstruction items sent to Pyinsalu

YANGON, 24 June—a total of eight Maung Myanmar vessels carrying various kinds of relief supplies left Labutta for Pyinsalu this afternoon.

Relief aids on board the vessels were 4300 CI sheets, carpentry tools, 2992 bags of paddy seed, foodstuff and clothes, and reconstruction materials for Pyinsalu, and machines to reconstruct embankment that deter sea water.—MNA