

Senior General Than Shwe welcomes back Prime Minister General Thein Sein

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe welcomed back Prime Minister General Thein Sein who arrived back from Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic by special flight this evening after attending the Third Greater Mekong Sub-region Summit (GMS Summit).

Prime Minister General Thein Sein participated in the Third Mekong Sub-region Summit (GMS Summit) from 30 to 31 March at the invitation of His Excellency Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein was also welcomed back at Nay Pyi Taw Airport by 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, Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Lt-Gen Myint Hlaing of the Ministry of Defence, Military Affairs Security Chief Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Maj-Gen Tha Aye and Maj-Gen Khin Zaw of Ministry of Defence, Adjutant-General Maj-Gen Thura Myint Aung, Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Wai Lwin, Deputy Minister for Transport Col Nyan Tun Aung, senior military officers, Director-General of the Office of the State Peace and Development Council Col Kyaw Kyaw Win and



Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Senior General Than Shwe welcomes back Prime Minister General Thein Sein at Nay Pyi Taw Airport.—MNA

departmental officials, Charge d' Affairs of Embassy of Lao People's Democratic Republic Mr Thongkhoun Sengphachan and officials.

Members of the delegation Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for National Plan-

ning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Director-General of the Government Office Col Thant Shin and other members of the delegation also arrived back here on the same flight.

MNA

Four political objectives

- * Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- * National reconsolidation
- * Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- * Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Four economic objectives

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

Four social objectives

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

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.

PERSPECTIVES

Tuesday, 1 April, 2008

Try to improve IT to keep pace with international community

Information technology is moving with the times. And with the advancement in informational technology, new items of IT products are available in great numbers.

As information technologies have improved each day with added momentum, today can be called the age of information technology.

Myanmar is holding information communication and technology exhibitions so as to catch up with the international community in IT development and to broaden the horizons of the people.

To help develop IT, Myanmar ICT Exhibition-2008 was held at the Tatmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road in Yangon from 23 to 25 March.

Workshops, seminars and exhibitions are also held annually so that young people can carry out IT-related tasks smoothly. Therefore, young people are to serve national interests by continuously learning new modern IT technologies for the nation to become modern and developed.

Overall, holding Myanmar ICT exhibitions will help improve not only the IT sector but also the economic sector.

“Untimely Rainfall Warning”

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March—According to the observations at (09:30) hour M.S.T today, low pressure area over Southeast Bay and adjoining East Central Bay, isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers are likely in Rakhine, Mon and Kayin States, Ayeyawady, Yangon, Magway, Bago, Mandalay and Taninthayi Divisions within next (48) hours commencing today.—MNA



Supervisory Committee for Library, Museum and Exhibitions Assistant Director U Myint gives a permission to Win Myint Moe, In-charge of Snow Flake Art Gallery, at Sangyong Road and Shin Saw Pu Pagoda Road in Sangyong Township on Monday.—H

People's Desire

- * Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views
- * Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation
- * Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State
- * Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy

Mily attaches go on excursion tour of Shan State (South)

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Accompanied by Daw Myat Ngwe, wife of Lt-Gen Ye Myint of Ministry of Defence, an excursion group comprising military attaches and their wives led by Military Attache of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Senior Col Le Van Thanh visited Taunggyi, Inle and Pintaya in Shan State (South) from 28 to 30 March.

The excursion group left Nay Pyi Taw for Shan State (South) on 28 March by car and arrived at Taunggyi in the afternoon. Military attaches and the commander played golf at Kanbawza Golf Course in Taunggyi and the excursion group visited Shwephonepawint Pagoda.

Chairman of Shan State Peace and



Military attaches of foreign embassies to Myanmar pay homage to Buddha Images in Pintaya Cave.—MNA

Development Council Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Thaung Aye and wife Daw Thin Myo Myo Aung hosted a dinner in hour of the excursion group at Ayethaya Resort Hotel in Taunggyi. Military Attache of Vietnam Senior

Col Le Van Thanh presented a bouquet to the cultural troupe which performed at the dinner and Commander Maj-Gen Thaung Aye presented souvenirs to members of the excursion group.

On March 29, the excursion group went to

Inle Lake and visited Seintheamadi Silversmith and Phaung-dawU Pagoda. They made cash donation at the pagoda.

Afterwards, they visited Myasatkya Weaving Factory at Innpawkon and Kaungtaing in Inle.

The excursion group went to Pintaya in the evening. During the visit to Pintaya, they visited Shwe-U-Min Cave yesterday. They left Taunggyi yesterday afternoon. They were seen off at Heho Airport by Daw Myat Ngwe, wife of Lt-Gen Ye Myint of Ministry of Defence, the chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council, Commander Maj-Gen Thaung Aye and wife Daw Thin Myo Myo Aung and senior military officers. — MNA



Commander Maj-Gen Thaung Aye sees off military attaches of foreign embassies to Myanmar at Heho Airport.—MNA

Minister inspects sub-power station construction in Patheingyi

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Minister for Electric Power No 2 Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint inspected construction of Shwesaryan Main Sub-power Station in Patheingyi Township on 24 March.

Project Manager U Zaw Ye Myint reported to the minister on progress of the construction work and connection of 230-KV twin bundle double circuit between Shweli and Shwesaryan through Mansan and construction

of towers.

After hearing reports, the minister called for timely completion of work.

Afterwards, Minister Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint visited the work site and inspected

concrete structures constructed in the Switch Yard and preparation for transporting power to cables. During the inspection tour, the minister fulfilled the requirements.

MNA

Slovakia opposes US base in Czech Republic

PRAGUE, 30 March — Slovakia is against the stationing of a US radar base on Czech soil, Prime Minister Robert Fico said on Czech Television (CT) on Sunday.

The US plans with the anti-missile shield divide NATO, Fico said, adding that the system is not yet fully developed and that it is even unreliable in certain respects.

“I think that it is very peculiar that Europe is silently following the arrival of a new era of deployment of foreign soldiers on the European continent,” Fico said.

“I think that all of US rejoiced at the departure of Russian soldiers from Czech and Slovak territory, and I do not comprehend it why the EU today agrees with the stationing of some kind of anti-missile defence here (in Central Europe),” Fico added. “If a request to host any element of anti-missile defence were addressed to Slovakia, the Slovak government would not agree with it,” he said.

According to Fico, he would like the countries negotiating about the bases to ask other European countries for

their opinions.

The United States plans to build a radar base in the Brdy military district, some 90 kilometres south-west of the Czech Republic’s capital Prague, along with an interceptor missile base in neighbouring Poland.

However, Russia has objected to the plan, saying it will threaten its national security.

Internet



People practise breathing exercises at an open air yoga camp at a park in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata early this month.—INTERNET

Clinton lays out financial proposals

WASHINGTON, 31 March — The Bush Administration’s plans to shake up US financial market regulation are “too short on action,” Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton said on Sunday, laying out her own set of proposals to address the issue.

Clinton, a US senator from New York, called for new standards governing mortgage lenders, reform of rating agencies to avoid conflicts of interest, a 30 per cent annual interest rate cap on all credit cards and more immediate authority for the Federal Reserve to regulate financial institutions.

Her comments, made

to *Reuters* in an interview, came a day before US Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson unveils proposals for broad reform of financial regulation.

“There is still a very serious gap between what the administration is proposing and the immediate crisis that we face,” Clinton told *Reuters*.

“Although I appreciate and agree with some of the recommendations, the blueprint is simply too short on action,” said Clinton, who is battling Illinois Senator Barack Obama to become the Democratic nominee for November’s presidential election. —MNA/Reuters

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Czech cities want compensation over NATO radars

PRAGUE, 31 March—Municipalities situated close to NATO radars in the Czech Republic will ask the government for compensation and information about the radars’ impact on human health, a city mayor said Friday.

“We will demand financial compensation for the location of the radar here. We will demand an improvement in the reception of television and radio signals that the radar hampers,” Miroslav Uchytil, mayor of the city of Chlumec and Cidlina said. “We also want proof that the radar is not harmful to the inhabitants of the area,” he said.

Fourteen municipalities in the vicinity of Chlumec and ten in the Slavkov area have asked the government for financial compensation, he added.

The construction of the NATO radar between Chlumec and Nepolisy started in 2004 and it went into operation last year. The radar at Slavkov was completed at the end of last year.—MNA/Xinhua

Arab summit says peace offer is under review

DAMASCUS, 31 March — A two-day Arab summit, subdued in the absence of leaders critical of Damascus, ended in the Syrian capital on Sunday with a warning to Israel that an Arab peace offer depends on Israeli behaviour.

Arab governments will review their strategies on peace with Israel, a statement added. It did not say what options were under consideration or when the review would take place.

“The continuation by the Arab side to present the Arab peace initiative is tied to Israel executing its commitments in the framework of international resolutions to achieve peace in the region,” a Damascus Declaration said.

The Arab peace initiative of 2002 offers Israel peace and normal relations with all Arab countries in return for withdrawal from all territory captured in the 1967 war. —MNA/Reuters

Two NATO soldiers killed in explosion in S Afghanistan

KABUL, 31 March—Two soldiers from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were killed on Sunday in an explosion while committing a routine patrol in southern Afghanistan, said an ISAF statement released here on Monday. “The two soldiers were airlifted to a medical facility and one soldier was pronounced dead on arrival and the other died subsequently,” the statement said.

In accordance with ISAF policy, the nationalities of casualties are not released until national next

of kin have been notified.

Soldiers mostly from US, Britain and Canada have been being deployed in the volatile southern Afghanistan for fighting militants and helping with reconstruction.

Conflicts and Taliban-related violence have left more than 300 people dead so far this year in war-torn Afghanistan, where Taliban militants recently have vowed to launch the “Spring offensive” to intensify their guerrilla-style attacks on national army and foreign troops.

Internet



The wreckage of a light aircraft smoulders on a street in Farnborough, north Kent on 30 March, 2008. Five people are believed to have been on board a private plane that crashed into residential properties near Farnborough in north Kent around 2.30pm, police said.—XINHUA

Five people killed in England aircraft crash

LONDON, 30 March—Two pilots and three passengers were killed in an aircraft crash on Sunday in south-eastern England.

A private aircraft crashed into homes in Farnborough, Kent, at 14:30 GMT and burst into flames, destroying a garage and house, which was empty at the time. The people who live in the damaged house were away on holiday. No-one on the ground was badly injured, but two people were treated for shock.

It is thought the plane got into difficulties just after take-off from Biggin Hill. The airport said the plane was a commercial flight en-route to France.

It had just taken off when the pilot made an emergency call and asked for permission to land again, airport chairman Andrew Walters said. “Unfortunately it crashed before reaching the airport,” he said.

London Fire Brigade sent eight fire engines to the scene while the London Ambulance Service sent four ambulances, four fast response cars, four duty managers and an area response team.

Internet



Models display creations from Chinese designer Qiu Hao's *Something Growing* Collection during the Singapore Fashion Festival on 30 March, 2008.—XINHUA

Europeans oppose US anti-missile shield in C Europe

PARIS, 31 March — Europeans are clearly opposed to the deployment of the American anti-missile defence system in central Europe, the findings of a new opinion poll has revealed. Published Friday by Harris Interactive Institute, the survey, which is coming shortly before the start of a NATO summit, slated to be held in Bucharest from 2 to 4 April, has revealed that the strongest opposition to the plan is found in Germany (71 per cent), Spain (61 per cent) and

France (58 per cent).

Likewise, the plan is also opposed, albeit by a relative majority, in countries such as Italy where 49 per cent of the people are against the plan compared to the 35 per cent who support it and Britain where it's opposed by 44 per cent and supported by 30 per cent of the population.

In the United States, by contrast, the planned deployment has won the

support of 49 per cent of the population compared to the 25 per cent who are opposed to it, according to the poll conducted for international television channel France 24 and the International Herald Tribune.

However, the idea of a missile defence system involving NATO and Russia, which is a Russian proposal, has greater support in Europe.

Xinhua

The Olympic flame is lit by Greek actress Maria Nafpliotou during the handover ceremony of the Beijing 2008 Olympic flame at Athen's Panathenian stadium site of the first modern Olympic games in 1896 on 30 March, 2008.—XINHUA



Six NZ soldiers face court martial over use of hashish

WELLINGTON, 30 March—Six New Zealand Defence Force personnel have been brought back from Afghanistan to face court martial for the alleged use or possession of hashish, Radio New Zealand reported on Friday.

The 107-strong defence contingent is helping with security and

reconstruction in Bamyan Province, Afghanistan.

The New Zealand Defence Force said the four men and two women have been charged with using a Class B drug at the Provincial Reconstruction Team base in Bamyan Province and returned from Afghanistan last week.

The soldiers were four

months into a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan as members of the provincial reconstruction team.

They could be sacked, fined or held at the service's correction facility if they are found guilty at a court martial, which is expected to take place in August.

Xinhua

All items from Xinhua News Agency

Philippines says Earth Hour observation successful

MANILA, 31 March — Philippine Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said on Saturday the country's first observance of "Earth Hour" environmental protection activity was successful.

The capital region observed a one-hour switch off from 8 pm to 9 pm Saturday, during

which the Cultural Centre of the Philippines complex in Pasay City was covered with darkness for one hour.

Organizations including the World Wildlife Fund (WWF)- Philippines, the Department of Energy and local government agencies organized a count-down ceremony in Pasay complex which is known

as an environmental flagship of the Metro Manila known otherwise for serious pollution of air and water.

Officials of the organizations also conducted a signature campaign to show support to environment protection.

Shopping malls, the Manila City Hall, several streets and government buildings of the financial hub of Makati City also observed the Earth Hour, while the Roxas Boulevard along the Manila Bay also turned off lights for one hour.

Police were deployed to areas where thugs might victimize passers-bys, but no major accident has been reported.

Xinhua

China Minmetals Development 2007 profit up 88%

BEIJING, 31 March— China Minmetals Development Co., a listed subsidiary of the state-owned metal trader China Minmetals Corp., said that its net profits rose 88 per cent in 2007, driven by domestic business.

Net profits were 1.06 billion yuan (149.7 million US dollars) last year, with earnings per share of 1.29 yuan, the company said in its 2007 annual report.

Revenue rose 11 per

cent to 85 billion yuan, with domestic customers accounting for 70 per cent of the total.

Changing tax policies slowed its steel exports in 2007, while strong domestic demand drove up domestic prices—and raw material imports.

Xinhua

Mortar bombings kill guards of Iraqi Vice-President

BAGHDAD, 30 March —Mortar shelling on Friday hit central Baghdad, killing two of the guards of Iraq's Vice-President Tariq Al-Hashmi, a local TV station reported.

The TV station affiliated with Al-Hashmi's party said two of the guards of the Vice-President were killed and four civilians were injured when mortar shells landed near his office in the international zone.

An Interior Ministry source said earlier that two of his guards were injured. It is not immediately clear if his office was intentionally targeted.

The international zone, or Green Zone, hosts the Iraqi Government facilities and the US and British embassies. It has been under constant mortar or rocket attacks since clashes between the security troops and Shiite militias broke out four days ago.

Two Americans have been killed in the past attacks. The US Government has asked its embassy staff to stay in reinforced buildings. —Xinhua



Angolan rescue workers and policemen work on the site of the collapsed criminal investigation department building in Luanda on 29 March, 2008. —XINHUA

China, Vietnam sign cross-border transport deal

VIENTIANE, 31 March — China and Vietnam inked here Sunday a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for inclusion of Nanning-Hanoi corridor and Youyiguan-Huu Nghi Border Crossing Point in the scope of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) Cross-Border Transport Agreement.

The MoU, signed by Chinese Vice Minister of Communication Weng Mengyong and Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Transport Le Manh Hung, is a bilateral materialization of the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement, Lawrence Greenwood, Vice President of the Asian Development Bank, said at the

MoU signing ceremony.

The agreement, a multilateral instrument for the facilitation of cross-border transport of goods and people in six countries sharing the Mekong River — Laos, China, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia and Thailand — formulated under the auspices of the bank's technical assistance, in general and the MoU in particular will help speed up movement of cargos and passengers in the sub-region by streamlining regulations and axing non-physical barriers, he said, noting that trade and tourism in China's southern region and Vietnam's northern region has been growing considerably in recent years.—MNA/Xinhua



Evening traffic passes among the shopping mall during “Earth Hour” as lights of the major shopping malls turn off at 8:00 pm, on 29 March. Bangkok joined other major cities of the world in a campaign to raise awareness about global warming by turning off lights of the major shopping malls and business centers.—INTERNET



Passengers are seen inside the new Terminal 5 building at Heathrow Airport in west London, on 30 March, 2008.—INTERNET

Ba cancels flights after chaos at new terminal

LONDON, 31 March — British Airways cancelled more than 100 flights over the weekend following the chaotic opening of its new 8.6 billion US dollars terminal at London's Heathrow airport.

The launch of the terminal has proved a public relations disaster for BA, which had hoped

the new building would answer months of criticism prompted by overcrowded facilities at London's main Airport.

The airline said it had cut 66 short-haul and European flights on Saturday and would cancel 37 more on Sunday after Terminal 5's grand opening on Thursday

descended into farce when its new baggage handling system failed to cope.

BA, which used to style itself “the world's favourite airline”, said on Saturday 15,000 bags whose owners had either flown or given up and gone home were still in the terminal.—MNA/Reuters

Turkey to host 50 million tourists in 2023

ISTANBUL, 31 March—Turkish Culture and Tourism Minister Ertugrul Gunay said on Sunday that 2023 target in tourism is to host 50 million visitors, and obtain 50 billion US dollars of income, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

Gunay made the remarks at the meeting of ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party in Antalya province in southern Turkey, saying that while the speed of tourism increase in the world is 6.5 per cent, this figure is 18 per cent in Turkey.

Noting that when AK Party came into rule the number of tourists visiting Turkey was 13 million, Gunay said that this rate increased to 23.3 million already.

MNA/Xinhua

Tokyo stocks open sharply lower

China bans Italian mozzarella imports

BEIJING, 31 March—China's quality watchdog has ordered a ban on imports of Italian mozzarella cheese after Italy on Friday recalled the product that was possibly tainted with

cancer-causing dioxin. “All entry and exit ports shall not handle quarantine applications for the Italian-made mozzarella,” the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and

Quarantine said Saturday in a statement on its website. Importers must immediately stop selling the cheese and recall such products that had been sold, it said. The mailing or carrying by travellers of mozzarella into China was also prohibited.

“Every batch of other kinds of cheese products from Italy must go through laboratory tests before they are allowed to enter the country,” it said.

MNA/Xinhua

TOKYO, 31 March—Tokyo stocks opened sharply lower Monday.

In the first 15 minutes of trading, the 225-issue Nikkei Stock Average lost 138.60 points, or 1.08 percent, from Friday to 12,681.87.

The broader Topix index of all First Section issues on the Tokyo Stock Exchange was down 14.01 points, or 1.13 percent, to 1,229.80. The Second Section also lost ground.—Internet

ECONOMIC NEWS

Singapore halts Italian mozzarella sales on scare

SINGAPORE, 31 March—Singapore has stopped sales of all Italian mozzarella cheese made from buffalo milk after Italy on Friday ordered a recall of the product that was

potentially contaminated with cancer-causing dioxin. Singapore's Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) said it had stopped all sales of the cheese pending laboratory

tests as a precautionary measure.

The last import of Italian buffalo mozzarella cheese into Singapore was on 6 January, but due to limited information it was unclear if the imported cheese was contaminated, the AVA said. Italy's Health Ministry said on Friday it was withdrawing products from 25 companies in the Campania region, where Italy's best buffalo mozzarella is produced.

France briefly prohibited sales of some Italian mozzarella on Friday, but revoked the ban hours later after winning Rome's assurances that none of the suspect cheese was exported there. Japan and South Korea had already blocked imports.

MNA/Reuters



Models present creations by Indian designer Arjun Khanna during the first day of India Fashion week in Mumbai on 29 March, 2008.—INTERNET



A rare wild jaguar seen and photographed in the United States by hunter Warner Glenn is bayed by hounds during a hunting trip at an unknown location in southwestern New Mexico, photo taken on 20 Feb, 2006.—INTERNET

Gunmen hold 55 children abducted in C African Republic

BANGUI, 30 March — Gunmen are holding 55 children captured in raids on villages in Central African Republic, the United Nations said on Friday, weeks after attacks that local authorities blamed on Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army. A team of UN investigators which visited the remote area around

Obo in the country’s southeast concluded that local authorities were powerless to protect the population from the fighters, who also still hold 50 abducted adults. Some 300 armed men attacked the four villages between between 19 February and 10 March, abducting more than 150 people.

They were tied with ropes at the hips and forced to carry away stolen food and supplies. Local authorities said the fighters were from the Ugandan rebel group, which became notorious for abducting children to become sex slaves or child soldiers during its 21-year war.

MNA/Reuters

Death toll mounts in Baghdad fighting

BAGHDAD, 30 March — The death toll mounted on Saturday in fighting in Baghdad where US forces have been drawn deeper into an Iraqi Government crackdown on militants loyal to Shi’ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

A top Sadr aide said Sadr’s representatives had met Iraq’s highest Shi’ite religious authority, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, in an effort to end the violence. The Sadr aide, Salah al-Ubaidi, said Sistani called for a peaceful solution. At least 75 people have been killed and more than 450 wounded in days of clashes and US airstrikes in Sadr City, a vast slum of about two million people, said Qassim Mohammed, spokesman for the health directorate for eastern Baghdad. Health workers say the

slum’s two hospitals are overflowing and understaffed, and a ring of Iraqi and US forces around Sadr City makes it impossible to evacuate the wounded. More than 200 people have been reported killed and many

hundreds wounded in the five days of fighting across southern Iraq and Baghdad since Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki launched a crackdown on Sadr’s followers in the southern city of Basra.

MNA/Reuters

Clinton says no intention of dropping out

JOHNSTOWN (Pennsylvania), 31 March — Defying mounting pressure from some party leaders to bow out, Democratic presidential hopeful Hillary Clinton told *The Washington Post* she will stick it out through the remaining primaries and the contested Florida and Michigan results are resolved. “I know there are some people who want to shut this down, and I think they are wrong,” Clinton

said in an interview in Sunday’s editions. “I have no intention of stopping until we finish what we started, and until we see what happens in the next 10 contests, and until we resolve Florida and Michigan. And if we don’t resolve it, we’ll resolve it at the convention.” Democrats in Florida and Michigan broke party rules and held primaries in January but the results were invalidated. Clinton

won both primaries, but her rival, Illinois Senator Barack Obama, was not on the ballot in Michigan. Clinton trails Obama in the race for 2,024 Democratic nominating delegates. But she says she can still beat the Illinois senator and that all Democrats should get a chance to vote. She has tried and failed to schedule a revote or have the votes in Florida and Michigan count. — MNA/Reuters

LONDON, 31 March — A 71-year-old man was jailed for 18 months on Friday after letting his wife starve to death. William Pottinger was sentenced after pleading guilty to manslaughter at an earlier hearing at Reading Crown Court. The court had heard his wife Gillian, who suffered from a mental illness, weighed just 63 pounds (28.5 kilos) when her body was found. The 61-year-

old stopped going out of the house in about 2003 after developing an ailment that meant she totally lost the ability to look after herself. She wasted away on a flea-ridden sofa in her home at Beecham Road, Reading, in June 2006. Pottinger, a retired binman, had regularly gone to the pub and bookmakers during this time and had failed to ask for help for his wife. — MNA/Reuters

Remains of soldier missing in Iraq identified

WASHINGTON, 31 March — The US Army has identified the remains of a soldier captured by insurgents in Iraq nearly four years ago, CNN reported on Sunday. Sergeant Keith Maupin, an Army reservist from Batavia Ohio, had been missing

since his convoy, part of the 724th Transportation Company was attacked near Baghdad on 9 April, 2004. His father, Keith Maupin, said military officials informed the family on Sunday afternoon that the remains of the missing soldier had been identified, the

Dayton Daily News reported on its website. The newspaper said a three-star Army general delivered the news to the parents at the support centre the couple run near Cincinnati, which aids service members and families.

MNA/Reuters

Ecuador warns of strong response for Colombia raid

QUITO, 31 March — Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa on Saturday warned of a strong response against neighbouring Colombia over a 1 March military incursion in its soil, stoking tensions

in the month long diplomatic feud. “On Monday they (Colombia) will have a strong and concrete response,” Correa said during his weekly radio address. “It will not be a

response of war or violence, it will be a response based on international law.” Ecuador broke off diplomatic ties with Bogota after Colombia forces attacked a rebel camp inside Ecuadorean territory, killing a top guerilla leader and more than 20 other people. The bombing raid raised the specter of war after Ecuador and Venezuela briefly sent troops to their borders with Colombia. Nerves quickly calmed during a regional meeting.

MNA/Reuters



More than 10,000 camels from across the Gulf will be competing for millions of dollars in prize money at a beauty pageant for the “ship of the desert” in Abu Dhabi next week.

INTERNET

New Constitution and Union System (2)

Si Thu Aung

“I think the 1974 constitution prescribed seven divisions, seven states and Unitary system due to the defects of the 1947 constitution.”

“The 1974 constitution was not a fixed one, and was different from the 1947 constitution. To draw the 1947 constitution, legal experts and the committee for drafting the State constitution initiated the constitution and gave finishing touches to it at the constituent assembly. Unlike that, the principles for the 1974 constitution to be approved through a referendum were laid down according to the advice and suggestions of the public.

“The advice and suggestions the people gave and made by post, in person individually and in group were collected. Moreover, 15 sub-commissions made field trips to various parts of the nation and conducted a public opinion poll. Then, the replies were gathered, similar ones were grouped and then compiled into six drafts on the State structure. Two of the six drafts were the systems in which township levels whether they were from any state or division would be responsible directly to the central Pyithu Hluttaw. So, the speaker of the Pyithu Hluttaw panel of chairmen would be the President. Of the two systems, the first was an ordinary one, and the other was that 11 national councils would be formed and the councils will have to elect members of the panel of chairmen.

“Two systems were that seven divisions and seven states would be formed. One of the two systems favoured formation of state governments, and the other did not favour that. The remaining two systems were to form eight states, and to form nine divisions and four states.

“During the public poll conducted in the provinces about 1300 people presented proposals. Of them, about 60 percent favoured Unitary system, 25 percent favoured ongoing 1947 style Union system, and 10 percent favoured federal system. As it was required to comply with the wishes of the people and fulfil the wishes of the national races that had not got a state, and a decision to practise the one-party centralized system, the nation had to choose the system of 14 states and divisions according to the prevailing situations. Therefore, Taninthayi Division (1) was designated as Mon State for Mon nationals that had not got a state, Chin Special Division as Chin State, and Rakhine Division as Rakhine State.”

“In 1988, the 1974 constitution became defunct with the international stream line resulting from the defects of implementing in Socialist economic plans. Then, the Tatmadaw had to take over State duties. Would you please explain how the Union and states will be formed according to the draft of the constitution the National Convention has adopted?”

“The present draft constitution is based on seven regions and seven states. What it is different from the 1974 constitution is that states are vested with powers to form own hluttaws, governments and courts and

three powers are shared to them. Moreover, our country is home to more than 100 national races. So, a self-administered division and self-administered zones are prescribed for every national race that has a reasonable size of population to have self-administration. So, Wa nationals have self-administered division, and Naga, Danu, Pa-O, Palaung and Kokang national races self-administered zones. In addition, of the national races who have not got Region or State, self-administered division and self-administered zones, the one whose population constitutes more than 0.1 per cent of the nation’s population has the right to elect a representative from among its population to the state or region hluttaw. The representative will become a member of the state or division cabinet and will have the right to carry out the affairs of the national race concerned. Moreover, every national race that has a reasonable size of population and resides in other divisions and states, not in the states and self-administered areas has the right to elect a representative from among its population to the state and region hluttaw. That is designed to protect the rights of the ethnic minorities. Then, Wa national race has the right to form self-administered division, and Naga, Danu, Pa-O, Palaung and Kokang national races have the rights to form self-administered zones.”

“If so, the present system reflects Union system more than demanding of eight-state.”

“Right. The opinion of those who favour the eight-state system is that the eight major national races—Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan reside in respective regions separately. That is their wrong view. They are claiming that Bamars live in seven divisions, so, they shout to form Bamar state.

“Think it over. In our country, more than 100 national races scatter around the country. Many Kayin nationals live in Ayeyawady Division, Naga and Shan nationals live in northern Sagaing Division. Kayin nationals also live in Bago Division. Shan nationals also live in Katha and Bhamo in Kachin State. Many Kachin nationals live in northern Shan State. Pa-O and Kayin nationals are seen in Mon State. And many Chin nationals are seen in Magway Division.

“It means those national races who vividly live in groups. Some national races reside sporadically in small villages, wards of other states and divisions. And some national races reside in different parts of the Union according to their livelihood. At a time when transport is experiencing rapid progress every citizen has the right to settle in any place or region of their choice in order to live a comfortable life. Therefore, in future, it is sure that a variety of national races will reside in all parts of the nation and then will be in oneness. At that time, there will be no region that is given the name of a national race as various national races will reside in the region. And only the name of the region would be left behind. This being the case, it can be said that the idea of eight-state has been outdated.”

“Shan State is just the name of a state. Not only Shan national races reside in Shan State. There are such national races as Wa, Pa-O, Kokang, Dhanu, Palaung, Lahu, Akhar, Taungyo and Intha live in Shan State. Some national races are greater in number than Kayah national races who have the state. It will be just only if the affairs such national races are considered.”

“Therefore, according to the prevailing situation, the national races who live in groups have been granted seven states as well as self-administered areas so that they can enjoy the right to exercise self-administration in their regions. It is due to the fact that all the 17 national race armed groups that had returned to the legal fold are all the national races. They resorted to armed struggle line for about 40 or 50 years for self-administration. Consequently, there reigned armed conflicts among national races, causing a great loss of lives and property of the people. Nowadays, realizing the genuine goodwill of the government, they returned to the legal fold. As such, the government, on its part, has fulfilled their wishes to the most possible degree and built national consolidation based on mutual trust and understanding. Only then, will peace prevail the whole Union and will development work be carried out all the more.”

“An idea that has struck me is that in the world there are few states that were given the name of national races in the nations that have been named the Union. In the United States of America said to be a genuine Union there are various national races such as Anglo-Saxon, Europeans, Africans, Puerto Ricans, Asians, etc. who reside together. But, all 50 states in the USA were not given the names of such national races. The states were virtually named as Florida, California, Texas, etc.”

“In India also, there are over 100 national races. However-the states of India were named as Uttar Pradesh, Orissa Raja Sthan, Bihar, etc. that are the names of regions. Later, there were such cases that some states in the far north-east region had to be named as Mizoram, Naga Land, Bodo Land, etc. that are the names of national races. But, in those states there reigned armed insurgency launched by some separatist groups and thus these regions remain unstable.”

“This is a point to be born in mind. In the book titled“ The Constitution of the Union of Myanmar” compiled by legal expert Dr Maung Maung, it is stated that just cultivate Union Spirit; difference in states is no use; place in the fore nationalistic spirit rather than national race; Shan, Kachin, Chin, Kayin, Kayah, Mon, Rakhine and Bamar are all national brethren. Those words are always to be born in our mind.”

“The entire national people are to make concerted and well-coordinated efforts for the nation to be prosperous. If national races such as Kayin, Shan, Kachin, Chin are different in thought and action their efforts will be in vain. The ancestors used to say that only concerted efforts bring about achievements.”

“In the forthcoming constitution states and self-administered areas were prescribed for different national races who have been granted self-legislative power, administrative power and judiciary power. It is meant that the government has granted unprecedented democracy rights to the national races out of genuine goodwill. And we firmly believe that the entire national races, on their part, will actively participate in the building of a peaceful, modern and developed democratic nation with nationalistic spirit and Union Spirit by doing their bit.”

(Translation: MS +TS)

“The entire national people are to make concerted and well-coordinated efforts for the nation to be prosperous. If national races such as Kayin, Shan, Kachin, Chin are different in thought and action their efforts will be in vain. The ancestors used to say that only concerted efforts bring about achievements.”

Prime Minister attends GMS Youth Forum

Subregion witnesses significant development

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh welcomed Prime Minister General Thein Sein of the Union of Myanmar when he arrived in front of VIP Holding Room on Second Floor of Don Chan Palace Hotel in Vientiane of Laos People's Democratic Republic at 2.30 pm on 30 March to attend a meeting with youths of GMS Youth Forum.

Similarly, the Laotian Prime Minister welcomed heads of governments of Greater Mekong Sub-region countries.

Before the start of the Youth Forum, Prime Minister General Thein Sein together with Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Chinese Premier Mr Wen Jiabao, Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, Thai Prime Minister Mr Samak Sundaravej, Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Tan Dung and ADB President Mr Haruhiko Kuroda made observations on paintings named "My World My Home" created by youths from GMS countries, posters and photos on eco-tourism displayed by Cambodia, China, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam, facts about Myanmar's eco-tourism, well-known places in Myanmar, culture and natural scenic views displayed at the booths.

Next, a meeting with

leaders of GMS countries and youths who are attending GMS Countries' Youth Forum was held at Dok Champa Room on the second floor of Don Chan Palace Hotel.

Present on the occasion were Prime Minister General Thein Sein, leaders of GMS countries, the President of ADB, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Director-General of Government Office Col Thant Shin, GMS

chairman Ms Boumphady Insisienmay of GMS Countries' Youth Forum read out the brief message of youths.

Afterwards, youth delegates presented respective messages to leaders of GMS countries and the President of ADB.

Later, meeting chairman of Third Summit of GMS Countries Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh made a speech on the occasion.

Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Chinese Premier Mr

the GMS Economic Cooperation Program, giving the youth of the sub-region opportunity to be involved in a big event of us, their older generation.

Since you all have started the program during the last week to come to Vientiane by caravans along the three GMS economic corridors, I sincerely believe that you now have more understanding on the "Three Cs'-Connectivity, Competitiveness and Community- of our subregion.

Leaders of GMS countries, President of ADB and representatives pose for documentary photo at GMS Youth Forum.

MNA



ministers, high ranking officials, the Vice-President of ADB, GMS coordinators and members, six youth delegates of Myanmar and youth delegates from GMS countries.

First, Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh made an opening speech on the occasion.

Next, meeting

Wen Jiabao, Thai Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej and Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Tan Dung made respective speeches on the occasion.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein also extended greetings and made a speech.

In his speech, he said: The GMS Youth Forum is the first of its kind under

One of the main objectives of the youth program is to bring together a diverse range of young generation in each GMS country to learn more about the GMS Program, which has started since 1992 and the Three Cs.

Within this 15-year period, our subregion has witnessed a significant progress in GMS priority

sectors in areas such as agriculture, energy, environment, transport, telecommunications, trade facilitation and investment, tourism, human resource development and private sector development.

National Youth Consultation in Myanmar was held on 3 December 2007 in Nay Pyi Taw. Altogether 36 young people

from all walks of life in Myanmar gathered for the first Myanmar GMS Youth Consultation and six participants have been selected to represent Myanmar at the Regional Youth Consultation to be held in Bangkok in January 2008.

Other GMS countries have been likewise six youth representatives each to participate in the whole youth program. All those thirty-six youth representatives are here today to share their views and thoughts in the context of the forward-looking dimension of the GMS Program.

Afterwards, ADB President Mr Haruhiko Kuroda made a closing speech.

After the youth forum, heads of states of GMS countries, the President of ADB and delegates posed for a documentary photo.

MNA



Prime Minister General Thein Sein being welcomed by Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh at GMS Youth Forum.— MNA



Prime Minister General Thein Sein attends GMS Youth Forum.— MNA

PM General Thein Sein attends dinner hosted in honour of Leaders of GMS

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March – Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein attended a dinner hosted in honour of leaders attending Greater Mekong Subregion Summit and the President of Asia Development Bank at Convention Hall Zone A of Don Chan Palace Hotel in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Present at the dinner were Prime Minister of Cambodia Samdech Hun Sen, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of China Mr Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister of Thailand Mr Samak Sundaravej, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam Mr Nguyen Tan Dung, President of the Asia Development Bank Mr Haruhiko Kuroda, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar U Nyan Win, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Myanmar Ambassador U Nyunt Hlaing, Director-General of Government Office Col Thant Shin and departmental heads, ministers from Greater Mekong Subregion, the vice-president of the Asia Development Bank, entrepreneurs and guests.

The Prime Minister of Lao PDR made an opening speech and enjoyed the dinner together with Leaders of Greater Mekong Subregion and the President of the

Asia Development Bank.

During the dinner, Laotian traditional dance troupe entertained the guests with dances and songs. The leaders and the President of ADB posed for documentary photos together with them. — MNA

Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh speaks at the dinner hosted in honour of leaders of GMS countries and President of ADB.— MNA



Prime Minister General Thein Sein together with heads of governments from Greater Mekong Sub-region countries attend business and investment dialogue of Third Summit of GMS

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March — Prime Minister General Thein Sein of the Union of Myanmar together with heads of governments from Greater Mekong Sub-region countries attended the business and investment dialogue of the Third Summit of the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries held at Sky Lounge Private Room of Fourteen Level Don Chan Hotel in Vientiane of the Lao People's Democratic

Republic at 4.15 pm yesterday.

Present on the occasion were Chinese Premier Mr Wen Jiabao, Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, Prime Minister of Thailand Mr Samak Sundaravej, Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Tan Dung and ADB President Mr Haruhiko Kuroda, Foreign Minister U Nyan

Win of the Union of Myanmar, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Myanmar Ambassador to Lao PDR U Nyunt Hlaing, Director-General of Foreign Economic Relations Department Daw Myo Nwe, Member of Board of Directors of Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Organization Vice-President of Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce

and Industry U Win Aung and members, ministers of GMS, coordinators of GMS, entrepreneurs of GMS and guests.

Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh presided over the meeting and delivered an opening speech on the occasion.

Next, Secretary-General of GMS Economic Forum Mr Oudet Souvannavong briefed on challenges of improving trade and investment in

GMS, meeting chairman Mr Hoang Van Dung of GMS Economic Forum on private sector in the drive for implementing agreement on transportation among GMS countries and former meeting chairman of board of directors and GMS Economic Forum and present member Dr Jingjai Hanchanlath on beefing up participation of small and medium businesses in the export market.

Afterwards, Chinese

Premier Mr Wen Jiabao Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, Laotian Prime Minister Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh, Thai Prime Minister Mr Samak Sundaravej and Vietnamese Prime Minister Mr Nguyen Tan Dung made respective speeches on the occasion.

Prime Minister General Thein Sein of the Union of Myanmar made a speech on the occasion saying that since the establishment of the GMS in 1992, government officials, businessmen and academicians of the six countries have held active and fruitful discussions on how to deepen trade and economic cooperation and promote common development in the region, making valuable contribution to the friendly exchange and mutually beneficial cooperation in the region.

The theme of this dialogue is "Enhancing (See page 10)



Prime Minister General Thein Sein attends third business and investment dialogue of GMS countries.— MNA

Prime Minister General Thein Sein together with heads...

(from page 9)

trade and investment in the GMS in the context of economic globalization”.

It is noted that three sub-titles have been discussed under three sessions according to the program.

It is also noted that the sub-titles, namely, (i) challenges to intra-GMS Trade and Improvements in the GMS investment climate, (ii) implementation of the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA): possible role for the private sector and (iii) enhancing investment of GMS small and Medium-Sized enterprises in the Export Market, have been deliberated by the GMS entrepreneurs.

Today, due to rapid development of economic globalization and regional integration, opportunities as well as challenges are arising in the region. We do believe that through cooperation of the member countries could take over the challenges and could achieve a win-win situation.

Implementation of the GMS Cross-Border

Transport Agreement (CBTA) will play as a supportive role for the facilitation of transport and trade. We need to explore possible ways and means how private sector can participate in the implementation of Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA). It is of my view that GMS business forum can play as a catalytic role to move forward this process.

Small and Medium Enterprises have been significantly contributing in the economic development of the developing countries. On the other hand, the SMEs have also supported to the economic development through investment promotion and creation of employment opportunities.

As we all well aware public-private sector cooperation is also important in regional economic cooperation. collaboration of public and private sector will be an effective mechanism for enhancing infrastructure development which requires heavy investment. Likewise,

transport infrastructure is also a basis need for trade and investment facilitation.

In Myanmar, not only public sector investment but also private sector investments are taking part in the transport infrastructure development.

We have two investment Laws, namely, Foreign Investment Law and Myanmar Citizens Investment Law, aiming to induce Foreign Direct Investment as well as Domestic Investment.

Foreign investors are being allowed to carry out the projects of transportation, port construction, comprehensive port development, port handling services and other infrastructure development projects under the foreign investment law.

According to the Myanmar citizens Investment Law, private sector is being allowed to carry out the projects of road construction and renovation of existing roads and to make investment in the port



Laotian cultural troupe performs at the dinner hosted in honour of heads of governments of GMS countries and ADB President.
(News on Page 9) — MNA

construction and port development projects which require heavy investment, in this way, private sector is very supportive in realization of the infrastructure plan of the State.

Myanmar has already signed the investment promotion and protection agreement with China, Vietnam, Lao PDR and Thailand which are GMS member countries. I presumed that the entrepreneurs would recollect these signed agreement. The signing of the agreement is an integral part of the economic cooperation among GMS countries and encouragement of private

sector investment.

In Myanmar, hydro-power projects are being implemented in cooperation with investors from Thailand and China.

As regards, power generation project, oil and gas project, port development project, industrial zone and other infrastructure development project are being opened up for the private sector.

He said GMS countries are implementing the Strategic Framework for Action on Trade Facilitation and Investment (SFA-TFI) individually and collectively.

A major achievement

in the GMS is the improved physical connectivity in the subregion nearly completion of the three main GMS transport corridors. A priority has been given to transform the three main GMS corridors to the economic corridors. Active participation of the private sector is necessary for completion of the full-fledge economic corridors.

Next, President of Asian Development Bank Mr Haruhiko Kuroda gave a speech. Prime Minister of LPDR Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh delivered a concluding speech.

MNA

Zimbabwe govt warns opposition over victory claims

HARARE, 31 March—Zimbabwe’s opposition said on Sunday it had won the most crucial election since independence, but President Robert Mugabe’s government warned it that premature victory claims would be seen as an attempted coup.

Tendai Biti, secretary general of the main MDC opposition party, told diplomats and observers that early results showed it was victorious. “We have won this election,” he said.

Projections from 12 per cent of the votes showed MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai winning 67 per cent nationally, Biti said.

MNA/Reuters

Arab Summit calls for further cooperation with China

DAMASCUS, 31 March — The 20th Arab summit was concluded here Sunday and adopted a resolution on boosting relations with China in all domains.

The Arab leaders reiterated previous resolutions on Arab ties with China, expressing their keenness to promote relations with China in all fields, said the resolution.

Earlier in the day, Sun Bigan, China’s Special Envoy on the Middle East, told Xinhua in an interview that China hopes the Arab summit in Damascus could further boost cooperation between China and Arab countries.

“We hope that the Arab summit in Damascus could further promote the traditional and friendly cooperation between China and Arab countries,” said Sun.

Sun, who came to attend the Damascus summit as a representative to Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, noted that it was the first time that China sent a representative of the foreign minister to participate in the Arab summit.

“Such a move reflects the fact that China values its relations with the Arab countries,” stressed Sun, who arrived here on Wednesday for a six-day visit.

MNA/Reuters

Olympic torch relays civilizations

BEIJING, 31 March — Greek ambassador to China Michel Cambanis said on the eve of the Olympic flame’s arrival in Beijing that he reckons the Olympic torch a carrier of civilizations.

“This journey of the Olympic flame from Athens to Beijing will mark the succession of the Athens Olympics by the Beijing Olympic Games,” Cambanis told Xinhua on Sunday.

“From the ancient Western civilization and modern Greece, the baton of relay will be passed to a highly valued representative of the eastern civilization, China, transforming this torch relay into a true relay of civilizations,” he added.

Cambanis was interviewed by Xinhua ahead of the handover ceremony of the Olympic flame, which was held Sunday afternoon at the Panathenian Stadium of Athens, the venue for the first modern Olympic Games in 1896.

The Olympic flame will arrive in Beijing Monday morning, to start a month-long “journey of harmony” throughout the world.

“Greeks are delighted by this fact not only for their feelings of friendship towards Chinese people, but also for their belief that countries with a cultural heritage such as the ones of Greece and China should put all their efforts in promoting the Olympic spirit, that is fair play and peaceful coexistence, around the world,” said Cambanis..

The ambassador said the Greek people are highly expecting the Beijing Olympics.

“Greek people are very much looking forward to the Beijing Olympic and Paralympic Games, to watch them from close or afar, to participate in competitions, to celebrate and congratulate Chinese people for their undoubted success.

“My country’s expectations, as well as my own, with regard to the forthcoming Games are high. It should be like that, since China has accustomed us in great achievements. There is no doubt that we are going to witness more of them next summer,” he said.

MNA/Xinhua

Perform meritorious deeds, share merits gained in unison

(A Uppathanbhaka)



Provisions offering ceremony in progress.



Title recipient Sayadaws seen at Maha Pasana Cave on Kaba Aye Hill.

- The Buddha came into existence for the welfare of all living beings.
- The Dhamma came into existence for the prosperity of all living beings.
- The Sangha came into existence for enabling all living beings to gain merits.

As mentioned in the Suttanippat Commentary, the Enlightened One delivered sermons for all 45 vassas in order that all living beings to be free from the round of rebirth (Samsara) according to their characteristics, wisdom and perfection.

The essence of the Teachings of the Buddha is categorized into three branches, namely, Pariyatti Sasana that is to be learned, Patipatti Sasana that is to be practiced and Pativeda that is to be realized.

During His life time, the Buddha delivered three Pitakas, that is, Vinaya Pitaka, Suttanta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka, and five Nikayas. In Mahaparinibbana Sutta, the Buddha himself uttered that, Vinaya Pitaka, Suttanta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka will be your teacher after my demise and eighty four thousand parts of Dhamma will admonish you. As a matter of fact, all the teachings of the Buddha represent Him and they are for living beings to take refuge.

Realizing that the three Pitakas and five Nikayas consisting of all the Dhamma to be practiced are indispensable for purification, flourishing, promotion and propagation of the Sasana, Arahants time and again held the Buddhist Councils in which they collectively recited, edited and scrutinized them.

The Arahants led by Ashin Maha Kasappa held the first Buddhist Council where they collectively recited, coordinated and scrutinized the three Pitakas and five Nikayas in order not to lose their original essence. After the first Buddhist Council, duties were assigned to monk disciples of Ashin Upali to take charge of Vinaya Pitaka, monk disciples of Ashin Ananda to take charge of Suttanta Vinaya and monk disciples of Ashin Sariputta to take charge of Abhidhamma Pitaka in order not to lose their original essence.

From the first Buddhist Council to the sixth

Buddhist Council, monk disciples of the Buddha were able to memorize the three Pitakas and five Nikayas and taught them to monks of successive eras. As a result, the Teachings of the Buddha remained in the forms of books and stone inscriptions.

Those who discharged Sasana duties such as learning, practicing and imparting the Teachings of the Buddha were none other than monks who are morally upright. It is incumbent upon members of the Sangha who are like fertile farmland and capable of admonishing the Dhamma for the welfare and prosperity of human beings both in mundane and supramundane and devas and for attainment of Nibbana.

The first meeting of Sangha of All Ganas was held at the Maha Pasana Cave on Kaba Aye Hill from 24 to 26 May 1980. The Organization for Sangha of All Ganas was formed with the aim of ensuring the purification, perpetuation and propagation of the Sasana, of enabling all members of the Sangha to live a peaceful life in line with Vinaya rules, of enabling them to practice seven Duras in the interest of the Sasana and of enabling them to bring about the unity of the Sangha. And basic rules and regulations and procedures were prescribed for the respective Sangha organizations. On 1st February 1980 as the last date, all nine Ganas that have been scrutinized were allowed to continue to be in existence and forming of other new Ganas have been prohibited.

The light of the Sasana is shining as all members of the Sangha under the Sangha Organizations at different levels have been making concerted efforts for promotion and propagation of the Sasana. Vinaya rules that are the lifeblood of the Sasana have been born only in the mind of noble persons. It means that Sasana exists as long as there are persons endowed with pure morality, pure concentration and pure wisdom. Actually, members of the Sangha are those who have become monks through higher ordination and endowed with training rules laid down by the Buddha. Those who were not ordained and in breach of training rules are not members of the Sangha.

The Buddha himself conferred Sasana titles on monks and persons who were outstanding in the perpetuation, promotion and propagation of the Sasana. The title recipients are 41 monks, 13 nuns, 13 person (male) and ten persons (female). The Buddha also conferred the respective titles on Chief Disciple Ashin Sariputta who was outstanding in wisdom, Chief Disciple Ashin Maha Mauggalan who was outstanding in power, Ashin Dhammadinna who was outstanding in preaching of the Dhamma, Beikkhuni Patavari who was outstanding in observing of Vinaya rules, Anathapantika who was outstanding in charity and Suppita woman who was outstanding in the care of patients.

It is also learnt that titles were also conferred on monks who were outstanding in missionary in Bagan Era. In the time of King Kyansitha, Varapandita title was conferred on Sanghasena mathera, in the time of King Alaungsithu, Agga Maha Pandita title on Mathera who compiled Dhattutha Treatise, in the time of King Kyaswa, Agga Wunsa Agga Pandita title on Mathera who compiled Saddaniti Treatise.

In time of King Sibaw, Maha Dhamma Raja title was categorized in five levels. The title conferred on Sasanapaing Sayadaw was Malalinkara Dhaja Dhammacenapati Atuladhipati Siripavara Maha Dhamma Rajadhirarajaguru title. In the time of King Konbaung, religious titles were conferred on both monks and laymen.

The first ceremony to confer Agga Maha Pandita titles was held the Thudhammar Resthouse near Kyauktawgyi Pagoda at the foot of Mandalay Hill on 7 November 1915. The Agga Maha Pandita title recipients were 11 monks including Presiding Sayadaw of Mahavithuddayon Kyaungtaik in Mandalay Bhadanta Visudda and Pali Sayagyi Saya Phay.

Likewise, the successive governments of the Union of Myanmar conferred religious titles on monks and laymen who were outstanding in discharging of the Sasana duties.

**[To be continued]
Translation: TS**

ADVERTISEMENT

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV GATI PRESTIGE VOYNO (30808)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV GATI PRESTIGE VOY NO (30808) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 31.3.2008 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of M.I.T.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S GATI COAST TO COAST
A DIVISION OF GATI LTD

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

MV VASCO DA GAMA VOYNO (VDG-091)

Consignees of cargo carried on MV VASCO DA GAMA VOY NO (VDG-091) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 1.4.2008 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT
MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY
AGENT FOR: M/S INTERASIA LINES
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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

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11 dead, two missing after bus hits van in C China

CHANGSHA, 30 March —At least 11 people died and two others were missing after a coach collided with a van and plunged into a river in central China’s Hunan Province on Friday morning.

The accident occurred at 9:40 am in Tankou Village, Sangzhi County, when a coach, heading from the southern city of Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, to the southwestern Chongqing Municipality, smashed into a van and then plunged into a river 15 metres below the road, a county government spokesman said.

MNA/Xinhua

ပစ္စည်းဝယ်ယူရန် ချိပ်ပိတ်တင်ဒါခေါ်ယူခြင်း (ကျပ်)

စဉ် တင်ဒါပိတ်ရက်	ပစ္စည်းအမျိုးအမည်	အရေအတွက်	တင်ဒါခေါ်ရက်
1.	Heavy Equipment Spare parts	1 Lot	31.3.2008
2.	Renovation of Rope Way	1 Lot	31.3.2008
3.	Gypsum Crusher	1 Set	31.3.2008
4.	Renovation of Lubrication System	1 Lot	31.3.2008
5.	Slurry Pump	1 Lot	31.3.2008
6.	Renovation of Cooler Tube	1 Lot	31.3.2008
7.	Renovation of Air Quenching Cooler	1 Lot	31.3.2008
8.	Renovation of Main Drive System	1 Lot	31.3.2008
9.	Supporting Roller with Bearing Metal	2 Sets	31.3.2008
10.	FO Pump	1 Lot	31.3.2008
11.	Renovation of Bucket Elevator	1 Lot	31.3.2008
12.	Air Compressor (42m³/min)	1 Set	31.3.2008
13.	Renovation of Packing Plant	2 Items	31.3.2008
14.	Renovation of Hightension Power Distribution System	1 Lot	31.3.2008
15.	Laboratory Apparatus	2 Items	31.3.2008

အမှတ်(၁) စက်မှုဝန်ကြီးဌာန၊ မြန်မာ့ကြွေထည်မြေထည်လုပ်ငန်း၊ ရောင်းဝယ်ရေးဌာန၊ ရုံးအမှတ်(၄၁)နေပြည်တော်တွင် ရုံးချိန်အတွင်း ဆက်သွယ်စုံစမ်းပြီး တင်ဒါများ လာရောက်ဝယ်ယူ နိုင်ပါသည်။
တင်ဒါပုံစံတရားဝင်ဝယ်ယူထားသူများထံမှ တင်ဒါကိုသာ လက်ခံပါမည်။
(အသေးစိတ် သိလိုပါက စုံစမ်းရန် တယ်လီဖုန်း အမှတ် ၀၆၇-၄၀၈၂၉၈)

မြန်မာ့ကြွေထည်မြေထည်လုပ်ငန်း

MYANMAR IVANHOE COPPER COMPANY LIMITED (TENDER NOTICE)

TENDER IFB NO. CS-08 (Service of Catering Service Provider for Expatriate Staff at Minesite)

CLOSING DATE & TIME: 7th April 2008 at 12:00 p.m.

Tender documents are available at the following address and queries can be made between 10 am and 4pm at MICCL Yangon office before the tender closing date.
Myanmar Ivanhoe Copper Company Limited
70 (I) Bo Chein Street, Pyay Road, Hlaing Township
Yangon, Myanmar (Tel: (95) 1-514194 to 7/ Fax: (95) 1 514208/ Email: miccl@miccl.com.mm)

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Wyeth (a Delaware corporation) of Five Giralda Farms, Madison, New Jersey 07940-0874, U.S.A., is the Owner of the following Trade Marks:-

PRISTIQ

Reg. No. 3598/2005

ECENZ

Reg. No. 3601/2005

EXSIRA

Reg. No. 3603/2005

in respect of "Pharmaceutical preparations for the prevention and/or treatment of diseases and disorders of the central nervous system, neurological disorders, vasomotor symptoms of menopause, anxiety disorders, neuropathic pain, fibromyalgia, urinary disorders, chronic pain, and functional somatic syndromes".

Fraudulent imitation or unauthorised use of the said Trade Marks will be dealt with according to law.

Win Mu Tin
M.A., H.G.P., D.B.L.
for Wyeth
P. O. Box 60, Yangon.
Dated: 1 April 2008

TRADEMARK CAUTION

Smith Kline & French Laboratories ., a company incorporated in United Kingdom at 980 Great West road, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9GS is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following Trademark:-

TAGAMET

Reg.No.4/629/1988

Reg.No.4/8116/2007

In respect of :Pharmaceutical, veterinary and sanitary preparations and substances.

Fraudulent imitation or unauthorised use of the said Trade-mark shall be dealt with according to law.

U Myint Lwin, Advocate,
LL.B, DBL
Dip in Marine Affairs(UK)
myintadvocate@mptmail.net.mm
Ph : 371 990

Arroyo orders to lower rice import tariffs

MANILA, 30 March —Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered finance officials to lower the tariffs imposed on rice importation as a measure to cushion the ongoing supply crisis, local media reported on Friday. Relaying the president’s message to reporters, Agricultural Secretary Arthur C Yap said the move would encourage the private sector to participate in importing rice together with the government's National Food Authority (NFA). Currently, tariffs for rice and corn stand at 50 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. The private sector is allowed to import an annual maximum of 300,000 tons of rice but less than 10 per cent of the quota was met over fears of the high tariffs, the online edition of Philippine Daily Inquirer said.

The agriculture chief added that his department has been mulling the responses to the calls of those people “who are calling for an end to the NFA’s monopoly of importation”. —MNA/Xinhua

Taleban attack Afghan power plant

KABUL, 30 March— Taleban insurgents blew up a power station in the southern Afghan province of Helmand on Saturday, killing two people and wounding eight, police said.

The power station, in the district of Girishk, is the main source of electricity for the area.

“Two employees of the station were killed and eight other people including two passers-by were wounded in the explosion,” said provincial police chief, Hussain Andiwai.

“The building was damaged but the power supply machinery is safe,” he said.

Taleban militants planted hundreds of roadside bombs and conducted scores of suicide bomb attacks in 2007 in Afghanistan, contributing to a record year of violence that killed 6,000 people, nearly 2,000 of them civilians.

MNA/Reuters

Turkish Army says kills 15 PKK in N Iraq

ISTANBUL, 31 March — Turkey’s Army killed 15 members of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in northern Iraq on Thursday using long-range land weapons, it said on Saturday.

The Armed Forces followed up the attack on the Kurdish separatists based in neighbouring northern Iraq with airstrikes on Friday, the Chief of General Staff said on its website. .

MNA/Reuters



Totalling over 130 descendants of Confucius from across the world hold a memorial ceremony for Confucius at the Confucius Tomb in Qufu, ancestral home of Confucius, in east China’s Shandong Province, on 30 March, 2008.—XINHUA

Study shows six more genes found linked to type two diabetes

BEIJING, 31 March — Scientists have found six more genes linked to type 2 diabetes in a study published on Sunday in *Nature Genetics*, a discovery that could help develop new forms of prevention and treatment. The finding extends the total number of genes linked to the disease to 16 and each of these genes therefore provides new clues to the processes that go wrong when diabetes develops.

In the study, 90 researchers from more than 40 European and US centres analyzed the genetic data of more than 70,000 people. The team found six genetic differences that each individually slightly raises a person’s risk of diabetes. Inheriting a disease variant of any of the genes from either parent could increase a person’s risk of developing type 2 diabetes by 10-15 percent, said Mark McCarthy of the

University of Oxford, who led the research.

But the risk for the few people unlucky enough to inherit all six variations is two to three times higher than the average risk, McCarthy said.

Each of the disease variants of the genes raises the risk of developing diabetes by only a small amount, but scientists say the combined impact of the collection of genes could be powerful.

Internet

Berlin zoo chief threatened over kitten killings

BERLIN, 31 March— German police are investigating an anonymous threat against Berlin Zoo’s director after he confessed he once killed four kittens by breaking their necks.

Zoo Director Bernhard Blaszkiewicz said he had killed the wild kittens in 1991, saying they posed a threat to the zoo’s animals as they can carry disease.

“I can tell you that the zoo reported a threat and we are investigating,” a Berlin police spokesman said. He declined to give more details. Blaszkiewicz defended his decision to kill the kittens in a newspaper interview published on Saturday.—MNA/Reuters

Mexico drug lord not in shootout dead

GUATEMALA CITY, 31 March — Mexico’s most wanted man is not among 11 victims of a drug gang shootout this week in Guatemala as had been suspected, a presidential spokesman said on Friday.

Two of the bodies found at the scene of the gunbattle were charred beyond recognition and investigators had been testing blood samples to see if either could be Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, the fugitive head of Mexico’s Sinaloa drug cartel.

“The information we have is that he was not among the dead and that neither of the burned bodies is him,” Rolando Robles, a spokesman for Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom told *Reuters*. —MNA/Reuters



Heart surgeons perform an operation. People who cut their stress levels and keep them under control face a 60-percent lower chance of suffering a heart attack or stroke than constant worriers, said a report unveiled at the 57th annual conference of the American College of Cardiology.—INTERNET

British hospitals to miss “deep clean” deadline

LONDON, 31 March — Around 13 National Health Service hospitals in England will miss a government deadline to complete a “deep clean” of their wards to help combat superbug infections, Health Minister Ben Bradshaw said on Saturday.

But the country’s other 170 general hospitals will complete the 60 million pound hygiene blitz by the 31 March target date, he told BBC television. Bradshaw said the independent Healthcare Commission watchdog would now follow up the programme by conducting inspections “to make sure that all hospitals have hygiene and cleanliness policies that are as good as the best”.

The national deep clean, announced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown last September, has been criticized as a publicity stunt.

Health experts stressed that regular cleaning was required, rather than a one-off scrub up that would only have a temporary effect on tackling hospital-acquired infections.

Leading medical journal the *Lancet* said Brown was “pandering to populism”, adding that the proven way to stop superbug infections was to make sure that doctors, nurses and visitors washed their hands properly. The government said the deep clean was just part of a wider set of measures to reduce potentially deadly infections such as MRSA and *Clostridium difficile*.—MNA/Reuters

Tiger-attacked survivors sue against San Francisco

LOS ANGELES, 31 March — The two brothers who survived a tiger attack at the San Francisco Zoo three months ago have filed claims against the city of San Francisco, seeking an unspecified amount of compensation, a report said Friday.

Kulbir and Paul Dhaliwal of San Jose, California, contend they suffered serious injuries and emotional harm when a Siberian tiger escaped its enclosure and attacked them

on Christmas day. The tiger killed the 19-year-old Carlos Sousa, a friend of the Dhaliwal brothers.

The claim against the city, which was filed Thursday by a Los Angeles attorney representing the brothers, state that Kulbir Dhaliwal, 24, had to have surgery on both knees because of his wounds in the attack, according to a report on the website of the San Francisco Chronicle daily.

MNA/Xinhua

British teenager accused of murder

LONDON, 31 March — A 16-year-old male youth has been accused of the murder of a 14-year-old schoolboy who bled to death from a cut to his neck, Scotland Yard said on Saturday.

Amro Elbadawi, from Kilburn in west London, died in hospital on Thursday around an hour after making his way to a nearby health centre.

MNA/Reuters



A Bulldog is groomed in the benching area at the Asian International Dog Show in Tokyo on 30 March, 2008.

INTERNET

SPORTS

Olympic flame arrives in Beijing

BEIJING, 31 March — A chartered Air China plane carrying the Beijing Olympic flame touched down at the Beijing Airport Monday morning.

The 2008 Olympic torch was lit one week ago in Ancient Olympia, Greece, marking the start of the domestic and international torch relay that will end on 8 Aug. with the Games’ opening ceremony.

An official welcome ceremony for the Olympic flame will be held late this morning at Tian’anmen Square. The torch relay officially starts on Tuesday in Beijing when the flame is scheduled to depart for Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The Beijing Games relay is the longest and most ambitious ever planned, lasting 130 days and covering 137,000 kilometers (85,000 miles) worldwide.

The holy fire of the Olympics will also reach Mount Everest, the world’s highest peak. It will be the first time for the Olympic torch relay to be held on the 8,844.43-metre mountain. — MNA/Xinhua



Chelsea’s Michael Ballack (R) challenges for the ball with Middlesbrough’s George Boateng during their English Premier League soccer match at Stamford Bridge in London on 30 March, 2008.—INTERNET

Premier League reports

LONDON, 31 March — Brief reports of Premier League matches played at the weekend:

Played on Sunday:

Chelsea 1 Middlesbrough 0

Chelsea remained in touch with leaders United but were poor against a Middlesbrough side who are still not safe from the drop.

Ricardo Carvalho’s header gave them an early lead but they wasted numerous chances to pull away and nearly paid the price as Boro’s Brazilian striker Afonso Alves twice hit the woodwork after coming on as a substitute.

Liverpool 1 Everton 0

Liverpool won at a canter against an Everton side rapidly running out of steam. Fernando Torres struck the only goal after seven minutes, his 28th of the season in all competitions, after a bad mistake by Yakubu Aiyegbeni.

Steven Gerrard rocked the post with a swinging volley while Everton, despite an improved second half, rarely threatened.

Tottenham Hotspur 1 Newcastle United 4

Goals are always guaranteed at White Hart Lane but few would have expected four for Kevin Keegan’s Newcastle.

Darren Bent headed Spurs in front but Nicky Butt levelled on the stroke of halftime. Tottenham capitulated after the break as goals from Geremi, Michael Owen and Obafemi Martins eased Newcastle’s lingering relegation worries.— MNA/Reuters



AC Milan midfielder Massimo Ambrosini, right, and Atalanta midfielder Cristiano Doni, left in white, jump for the ball during the Italian Serie A first division soccer match between AC Milan and Atalanta at the San Siro stadium in Milan, Italy, on 30 March, 2008.—INTERNET

Davenport crushes Ivanovic in Miami

MIAMI, 31 March — Lindsay Davenport revived memories of when she was the game’s top-ranked player by crushing world number two Ana Ivanovic 6-4, 6-2 in the Sony Ericsson Open third round on Sunday.

Ivanovic, who arrived in Miami after winning the Pacific Life Open title in Indian Wells, had no answers to the aggressive game brought to the court by world number 33 Davenport.

“Obviously the first time you play against someone you try to get to know them and try to get rhythm in the beginning,” Ivanovic said. MNA/Reuters



Liverpool’s Fernando Torres scores against Everton during their English Premier League soccer match at Anfield in Liverpool, northern England, on 30 March, 2008. —INTERNET

Levet overcomes Fisher to win Andalucia Open

MARBELLA (Spain), 31 March — Frenchman Thomas Levet earned his fourth European Tour title when he overcame Briton Oliver Fisher at the first sudden-death playoff hole at Aloha to win the Andalucia Open on Sunday.

Fisher’s closing bogey at the 72nd hole and a par by Levet, both for five-under 67s, had locked the pair on 16-under-par 272, three strokes ahead of holder Lee Westwood of Britain.

Fisher, 19, and in his second season on the European Tour, looked as though he had the title in his grasp when he came to the final hole a stroke ahead of Levet but he found the pond with his drive to bogey.

Levet saved par to send the tournament into extra holes.

At the first sudden-death hole, Fisher came up short of the green to bogey, while Levet’s two putts for par earned him the 250,000 dollars first prize.

Former European number one Westwood, the leader of the first and third rounds, had looked the likely winner at first. He began the day a stroke ahead of the field and kept his lead with another fine start to the round. MNA/Reuters



Minea Blomqvist of Finland hits her second shot on the 18th fairway during the final round of the LPGA Safeway International golf tournament in Superstition Mountain, Arizona, on 30 March, 2008. Blomqvist finished in third place at 14 under par.—INTERNET

Stuttgart fail to capitalize on Bundesliga mishaps

BERLIN, 31 March—VfB Stuttgart failed to take advantage of a series of mishaps above them when they were held to a goalless draw away to Hanover 96 on Sunday.

Stuttgart, last season’s champions, had the chance to move within a point of the Champions League places after the top five had all failed to win on Saturday but Armin Veh’s side succumbed to the same bout of vertigo.

Mario Gomez missed their best chance, putting a free header from a few metres out far too close to goalkeeper Robert Enke when he seemed certain to score at the end of the first half. A draw kept Stuttgart sixth on 42 points, three behind Schalke in the third and final Champions League spot.

With eight games left, Bayern Munich lead the standings with 54 points following a 1-1 derby draw at Nuremberg on Saturday. Hamburg SV, held 1-1 by Arminia Bielefeld, are second on 47.

Schalke, who drew 0-0 at Karlsruhe on Saturday, are third on 45, one ahead of Bayer Leverkusen and Werder Bremen following their defeats by Eintracht Frankfurt and Duisburg. MNA/Reuters



Germany’s Maren Baumbach celebrates after scoring during their match against Cuba during the qualification handball tournament for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games in Leipzig on 30 March, 2008.—INTERNET

China, Tunisia highlight bilateral relations

TUNIS, 31 March— A senior official of the Communist Party of China (CPC) met with Hedi M'enni, general secretary of the Democratic Constitutional Rally of Tunisia, here on Saturday. They pledged to strengthen cooperation between the two parties.

Li Changchun, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, spoke highly of the Democratic Constitutional Rally's efforts in safeguarding the nation's independence, and

improving the economy and people's living standards.

Li said China and Tunisia have deepened their political trust and economic cooperation and strengthened consultations in international and regional affairs since the two countries forged diplomatic ties in 1964.

In this new historical period, the two countries are facing the same tasks of safeguarding sovereignty, maintaining stability, speeding up development and promoting democracy in international relations, he added. —MNA/Xinhua

Venezuela to invest \$ 2.1b in energy projects in 2008

CARACAS, 31 March—Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said Sunday that his government would invest nearly 2.1 billion US dollars in energy projects this year as part of the so-called Energy Revolution plan.

From 2008 to 2013, the government would spend a total of 20 billion dollars on 52 individual projects, Chavez said in his weekly "Alo Presidente" television and radio programme.

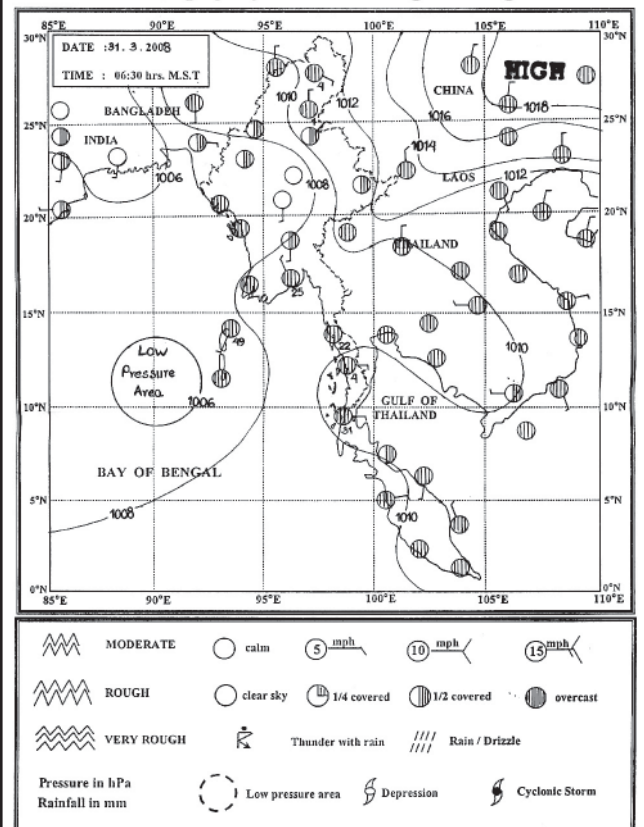
He did not give details on the plan, but said Venezuela would become Latin America's largest fertilizer and plastic producer by 2013.

The projects would also generate 600,000 jobs, the President added.

Chavez said Venezuela's National Development Fund now has 35.3 billion dollars thanks to investments from the Central Bank and the state-run oil company Petroleos de Venezuela.

MNA/Xinhua

Weather Map of Myanmar and Neighbouring Areas



WEATHER

Monday, 31 March, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 9:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions, scattered in Kachin State, isolated in Shan and Mon States, upper Sagaing, Mandalay and Bago Divisions, weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Day temperatures were (7°C) below March average temperatures in Eastern Shan State, (3°C) below March average temperatures in Kayan State, Ayeyawady Division and about March average temperatures in the remaining States and Divisions. The significant day temperatures were Myingyan, Nyaung U and Hinthada (39°C) each, Monywa, Kalewa, Minbu, Magway and Hpa-an (38°C) each. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Coco Island (2.40) inches, Kawthoung (1.22) inches, Yangon (Kaba-Aye) (0.99) inch, Dawei (0.90) inch, Yangon Mingaladon (0.67) inch, Monywa (0.47) inch, Khayan (0.20) inch, Thaton (0.19) inch, Myeik (0.16) inch, Putao (0.15) inch and Myittha (0.07) inch.

Maximum temperature on 30-3-2008 was 97°F. Minimum temperature on 31-3-2008 was 71°F. Relative humidity at (09:30) hours MST on 31-3-2008 was 84%. Total sunshine hours on 30-3-2008 was (2.8) hours approx.

Rainfall on 31-3-2008 was (0.67) inch at Mingaladon, (0.99) inch at Kaba-Aye and (Tr) at Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2008 was (1.34) inches at Mingaladon, (1.46) inches at Kaba-Aye and (0.35) inch at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (10) mph from Southwest at (17:30) hours MST on 30-3-2008.

Bay inference: According to the observations at (06:30) hrs MST today, yesterday's low pressure area over Southeast Bay and adjoining East Central Bay still persists. Weather is partly cloudy in the North and West Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy in Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 1-4-2008: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Rakhine States, Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions scattered in Mon and Kayin States, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady and Taninthayi Divisions and weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree of certainty is (60%).

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

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

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 1-4-2008: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 1-4-2008: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 1-4-2008: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).



The Xavier cheerleaders perform during the first half of the NCAA men's basketball tournament West Regional final between UCLA and Xavier, on 29 March, 2008, in Phoenix.—INTERNET

France offers plane if Betancourt released

PARIS, 31 March— France said on Sunday it was ready to evacuate French-Colombian hostage Ingrid Betancourt in the event of a deal between Colombia and rebels holding her.

A spokesman for President Nicolas Sarkozy said a plane with medical facilities would be kept on standby in France ready to intervene "at any time" on Sarkozy's orders.

Colombia said on Saturday France would be willing to take in former guerilla fighters as part of a possible deal to free scores of hostages, including Betancourt. —MNA/Reuters

Qatar to host 21st Arab Summit

DAMASCUS, 31 March—Qatar will host next Arab summit, Arab League (AL) Secretary General Amr Moussa announced Sunday when reading out the Damascus Declaration at the closing session of the 20th Arab summit here.

Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani subsequently gave a brief speech, saying that after consultatin with the AL and the Somali side, his country would host the next summit instead of Somalin in view of the situation in the eastern African country.

According to the Arabic alphabetic sequence of the names of the AL members, the 21st Arab summit should be hosted by Somalia.—MNA/Xinhua



Tuesday, 1 April
View on today

7:00 am

1. တောင်တန်းသာသနာပြု
ဆရာတော်ဘုရားကြီး၏
ပရိတ်တရားတော်

7:25 am

2. To be healthy
exercise

7:30 am

3. Morning news

7:40 am

4. အသွင်သဏ္ဌန်တောက်ပသည့်
သင်္ဃေတန်ပေါက်တံတား

7:50 am

5. Musical programme

8:00 am

6. အတီးပြိုင်ပွဲ

8:15 am

7. ပြည်ထောင်စုတိုင်းရင်းသား
ရိုးရာအက

8:30 am

8. International news

8:45 am

9. Musical programme

4:00 pm

1. Martial song

4:10 pm

2. Let's Go

4:30 pm

3. ကဗျာပန်းခွယျာဉ်

4:40 pm

4. Musical programme

4:50 pm

5. အဆေးသင်တက္ကသိုလ်

ပညာရေး ရုပ်မြင်သံကြား

သင်ခန်းစာ

—ဒုတိယနှစ်

(ရူပဗေဒအထူးပြု) (ရူပဗေဒ)

5:05 pm

6. မျိုးချစ်စိတ်ဓာတ်ရှင်သန်

ထက်မြက်ရေးတေးများ

5:15 pm

7. Musical programme

5:30 pm

8. ဆိုကြမယ်ပျော်ကြမယ်

6:00 pm

9. Evening news

6:30 pm

10. Weather report

6:35 pm

11. ကြယ်ပွင့်များရဲ့ရင်ခုန်သံ

6:50 pm

12. သုတစုံလင်ရွှေညက်ရှင်

7:15 pm

13. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ

“ချစ်တယ်---ချစ်တယ်”

(အပိုင်း-၁၁)

7:50 pm

14. ထေရဝါဒဗုဒ္ဓသာသနာတော်

ထွန်းကားပြန့်ပွားရေးဆရာ

ဒကာလက်တွဲညီစွာကြိုးပမ်း

ဆောင်ရွက်မှု (အပိုင်း-၂)

8:00 pm

15. News

16. International news

17. Weather report

18. ကြေးမုံရိပ်သွင်တေးနယဉ်

19. နိုင်ငံခြားဇာတ်လမ်းတွဲ

“မေတ္တာမျဉ်းပြိုင်”

(အပိုင်း-၁၅)



Prime Minister General Thein Sein greets Laotian President Mr Choummaly Sayasone at Ho Kham Presidential Palace in Vientiane.
MNA

Myanmar, Lao share pleasure to witness each other's development

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March—Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Thein Sein called on President of Lao People's Democratic Republic Mr Choummaly Sayasone at Ho Kham Presidential Palace in

bassador to LPDR U Nyunt Hlaing, Director-General of Government Office Col Thant Shin, Director-General of Protocol Department U Kyaw Kyaw, departmental heads, Minister for the President's Office Mr Soubanh Srithirath,

Prime Minister General Thein Sein said it is pleased to see that Laos has enjoyed fruits of development under the leadership of the president of LPDR and Laos could successfully hold the ASEAN Summit and the 3rd Summit of the Greater Mekong Sub-region countries. The Prime Minister explained the progress of Myanmar to the Laotian President.

The President of Lao PDR expressed his delight for cementing of bilateral ties and cooperation between the two nations and seeing all-out efforts being made by Myanmar government to bring about harmonious development of the nation. He also said that efforts for democracy transistion in Myanmar will meet with success and Laos as a good neighbour will continue supporting Myanmar.—MNA



Prime Minister General Thein Sein calls on Laotian President Mr Choummaly Sayasone at Ho Kham Presidential Palace in Vientiane.— MNA

General Thein Sein arrives in Laos to attend 3rd GMS

NAY PYI TAW, 31 March – General Thein Sein, Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar, left here by a special flight for Lao PDR to attend the 3rd Greater Mekong Sub-Region Summit to be held in Vientiane, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, on 29 March.

He was accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Director-General of Government Office Col Thant

Shin and departmental heads.

They arrived at Wattay International Airport in Vientiane of the Lao People's Democratic Republic at 12.15 pm local standard time.

The Prime Minister was welcomed there by Myanmar Ambassador U Nyunt Hlaing, Deputy Director-General of the Protocol Department of Lao PDR Mr Viengloun Bhupha and Government Representative Minister for Agriculture and Forestry Mr Sitaheng

Latsaphone.

A young Laotian girl presented a bouquet to the Prime Minister.

Mr Viengloun introduced the Prime Minister to the Laotian senior government officers.

Myanmar Ambassador U Nyunt Hlaing, Military Attache Brig-Gen Than Win and staff members of Myanmar Embassy in Vientiane welcomed the Prime Minister.

Later, the Prime Minister and party went to Don Chan Palace Hotel.—MNA

Vientiane, Laos, today.

Also present at the call were Minister for Foreign Affairs U Nyan Win, Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Myanmar Am-

Minister for Agriculture and Forestry Mr Sitaheng Latsaphone, Laotian Ambassador to the Union of Myanmar Mr Kouily A. Souphakhet and senior officials.



Prime Minister General Thein Sein being welcomed by Mr Sitaheng Latsaphone, Minister for Agriculture and Forestry in Vientiane.—MNA