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Agricultural Development Committee Chairman State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects agricultural equipment manufactured by Shwe Tun Co Ltd.—MNA

Use of machines in entire farming work cuts cultivation time, reduces labour, cost Secretary-2 inspects reploughing of farmlands

YANGON, 29 Aug — Chairman of the Agricultural Development Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, accompanied by officials of

the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials, this morning inspected a pilot project to transform late-monsoon farmlands of regions and units under the

Yangon Command in wetlands and low-lying areas of Barlar region into normal monsoon farmlands. The project is being launched to educate farmers in Hmawby, Hlegu and

Mingaladon townships for ever greening of the 30-mile radius of Yangon International Airport.

On arrival at Barlar farm of the command at the junction of Yangon-Bago Highway and No 3 Highway in Mingaladon Township, the Secretary-2 was welcomed by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe,

Mingaladon Station Commander Brig-Gen Min Thein, and others. The Secretary-2 inspected reploughing and weeding on the farmlands one after another with the use of agricultural machinery to meet the sown acreage target of the division. Some farmlands were inundated in Barlar region at the border of Mingaladon and Hlegu townships due to heavy rains.

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Due to heavy rains, some of the farm lands in Yangon Division were inundated. As the floods are receding, preparations should be made for cultivation of crops at the fields in time. Local authorities are going to render necessary assistance to farmers.



Agricultural Development Committee Chairman Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein meets local farmers from Hmawby, Hlegu and Mingaladon townships.— 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

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PERSPECTIVES

Monday, 30 August, 2004

Strive for development of science and technology

Now is the age of Information Technology (IT). IT has a great influence on development of the world. At such a time, the Government of the Union of Myanmar is paying serious attention to IT development in the country.

In his address at the Annual General Meeting of the Myanmar Computer Federation, the Myanmar Computer Scientists Association, the Myanmar Computer Industrialists Association and the Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association held at the MICT Park in Hline Township on 28 August, Chairman of the Myanmar Computer Science Development Council Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt said that the Government is making concerted efforts not only for ensuring the nation's IT standard to be on a par with that of international level but also for boosting the national interest through effective use of modern technologies.

In its drive for shaping a brighter future in the interest of the nation and its people, the Government is providing effective encouragement for enabling the nation to catch up with world class communication technology. Now, some Western powers are taking full advantage of technological gap in order to widen the gap of development and wealth and they are resorting to all the possible ways and means to get the developing countries under their thumb.

Only if a developing nation like Myanmar is able to make progress in science and technology, it can polish national prestige and integrity and safeguard the sovereignty.

The strength of Myanmar Computer Federation, Myanmar Computer Scientists Association, Myanmar Computer Industrialists Association and Myanmar Computer Enthusiasts Association plays a vital role in making efforts to achieve this end. Thanks to the united efforts of the associations and their constant learning on science and technology which is rapidly changing in the world, it can be witnessed that the ICT sector of Myanmar is developing with greater momentum.

Due to cooperation with friendly nations including ASEAN member countries and active participation of those at the national level and in the private sector, better results have been achieved in making efforts for development of the ICT sector in Myanmar. Only when science and technology is applied effectively will the nation be free from other's influence and able to stand tall among the nations of the world.

At a time when the Government is giving greater encouragement to those who are engaged in the tasks for development of science and technology, computer scientists, industrialists and enthusiasts are urged to actively participate in the endeavours of the Government.

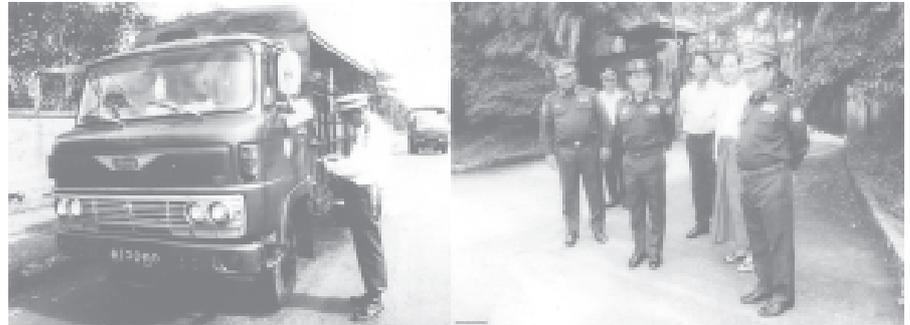


SNOOKER C'SHIP:
The Rave Myanmar Snooker Championship, jointly sponsored by the Myanmar Billiard & Snooker Federation and Sein Wut Hmon Co was held at Asia Plaza on 38th Street in Yangon on 28 August. Photo shows Aung San Oo (Mandalay) who stood first in the C'ship. (H)

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

Dry Day inspection teams supervised



Dry Day Supervisory Committee Vice-Chairman Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe and committee members supervise inspection teams on the Dry Day. — MNA

Rural development works inspected

YANGON, 29 Aug — Director-General of the Development Affairs department under the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Myo Myint together with officials inspected development activities in various townships in Mandalay Division on 27 August morning.

First, the director-general and party arrived Pyawbwe and inspected growing of flowering plants along roads, paving of platforms and dredging of drains. Next, they went to Meiktila and inspected the water supply station No 1.

Then, they proceeded to Kyaukse and inspected rural and township development works. They also inspected paving of tarred roads, growing of shade trees and flowering plants, and paving of platforms. — MNA

YANGON, 29 Aug —The dry day inspection teams today checked the use of vehicles of Tatmadaw and departments at the main points of Yangon City.

The inspection teams checked dry day pass, driver's licence, wheel tax and wearing of uniforms and violation of traffic rules from 7 am to 5 pm.

Dry Day Supervisory Committee Vice-Chairman Minister at the Prime Minister's Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, together with the Supervisory Committee members Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Brig-Gen Phone Swe, Deputy Minister for Hotels & Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, Director-General of the Myanmar Police Force Brig-Gen Khin Yi, Lt-Col Aung Thu of the Quartermaster-General's Office, Director-General U Thaik Tun, Directors Lt-Col Tin Maung Kyi and U Myo Nyunt, Committee Secretary Deputy Director-General U Sein Hla and officials today supervised the inspection teams. — MNA



Director-General of Development Affairs Department Col Myo Myint and officials inspect paving of platforms in Kyaukse. — PBANRDA

Nursery Market Festival continues

YANGON, 29 Aug — The Nursery Market Festival continued at Myay Padetha Park in Bahan Township here today with the aim of providing necessary assistance to growers and attracting the public to be interested in agriculture, horticulture, livestock breeding and vegetable farming.

Kitchen crops, fruits and saplings of herbal plants are being shown at the festival. Poultry farming and fish breeding are also exhibited there.

Educative booklets and pamphlets on utilization of fertilizers and pesticides are also available there. — MNA



The PTA annual meeting of Basic Education Primary School No 10 of Bahan Township for 2003-2004 academic year was held in conjunction with a ceremony to give away prizes to outstanding students at the school on 29 August. Headmistress Daw Sein Myaing presents a prize to Maung Hein Zaw Zaw Myint who stood first in the second standard. — (H)

Report says Iraqi militants seize two French journalists

DOHA, 28 Aug—Two French journalists have been taken hostage in Iraq by Islamic militants demanding the rescinding of a ban on the Islamic headscarf in French schools, the Arabic satellite news channel Al-Jazeera reported.

The kidnapers from the Islamic Army in Iraq, the same group which killed Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni after taking him hostage, gave Paris a 48-hour ultimatum to meet its demands, the Qatar-based television said citing "our own sources in Iraq".

The channel identified the kidnapped Frenchmen as missing journalists Christian Chesnot of Radio France Internationale and Georges Malbrunot of Paris daily *Le Figaro* and said it had received video footage of the two newsmen.

The pair went missing on August 20 after leaving Baghdad for the Iraqi Shiite holy city of Najaf, where US forces were fighting Shiite Muslim militiamen.

The group is demanding that "France rescinds within 48 hours the law banning" Islamic headscarves in schools, describing the law as "an injustice and an attack on the Islamic religion and individual freedoms," Al-Jazeera said.

The French foreign ministry in Paris was unable immediately to confirm the Al-Jazeera report.

Kidnappings of journalists and other foreigners have become common in Iraq as guerrillas attempt to force countries to withdraw their troops from the war-ravaged country or extort money.

Baldoni's captors had threatened to kill their hostage unless Italy withdrew its 3,000 troops from Iraq within 48 hours. — *Internet*



Nepalese hostages shown saying US "lies" brought them to Iraq

DUBAI, 28 Aug—Twelve Nepalese held hostage in Iraq were shown on video footage on an Islamist website, with one of them reading a statement saying they had been misled into working there by "American lies".

"We come here to Iraq on the basis of an agreement between our company, Nepalese agency, and the American (army), with the help of a Jordanian company... to help with American force," said one

of the hostages, seated amongst the 11 other captives.

"The salary is ... 2,500 dollars they give us on guarantee, and then they said for us that the situation is not dangerous in Iraq but we see the situation" is dangerous, added the hostage, reading a statement in broken English that was difficult to comprehend.

"We are arrested by unknown group and this is on evidence the situation is not under American" security or control in Iraq, said the hostage, who had a US flag pinned to his chest, covering the front of his shirt. "So we ask anyone who wants to come to Iraq not to be cheated by these high salary because they are false and America is lying," he added, fumbling over the words.

As he spoke, the other hostages held up what appeared to be their passports. Some were seated alongside the speaker on the floor while others stood behind, all of them against a black backdrop which read: "Ansar al-Sunna".

On 20 August, the Army of Ansar al-Sunna said in a statement that it had taken captive 12 "infidels" who were "affiliated with a Nepalese company" and had been helping "US crusader forces to fight Islam". Last week, an employment agency in Amman said the 12 had come to Jordan seeking jobs but were lured by offers of higher salaries in Iraq. "They were hired for Jordan," assistant manager Haytham Mohammad of the Morning Star agency, which has offices in Nepal and in other parts of the world, said. The 12 arrived in Amman around three months ago.



US Army soldiers withdraw from central Najaf, Iraq, to the outskirts of the city after a peace deal was reached on 27 Aug, 2004. — *INTERNET*

Five killed in latest round of Iraq violence

BAGHDAD, 28 Aug—Shiite militants and US forces battled throughout the Baghdad slum of Sadr City, and a mortar barrage slammed into a busy neighborhood in the capital in a new wave of violence Saturday that killed at least five people and wounded dozens of others.

US warplanes and tanks later bombarded targets in the Sunni stronghold of Fallujah, and US forces exchanged gunfire with insurgents along the city's eastern outskirts and the main highway running to neighboring Jordan, witnesses said.

The fighting injured at least 14 people, hospital officials said.

The new violence came as residents of Najaf began digging out of the rubble and debris left by three weeks of fierce fighting between militants and US forces in the holy city.

The crisis ended Friday when the militants withdrew under a peace deal brokered by Iraq's most senior Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani.

Iraqi police spread out across Najaf's devastated Old City on Saturday, patrolling in vehicles and on foot and taking over checkpoints that until recently were manned by followers of rebel Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

US forces pulled back from the neighborhood, the site of much of the fighting. "It's a joyful thing, the armed men have left Najaf and (neighbouring) Kufa," interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi told al-Iraqiyah television Saturday.

Internet

Internet

Guindon may be first Air Force Iraq suicide

MERRIMACK, 28 Aug — The New Hampshire Air National Guard member who killed himself 18 Aug— one day after returning from a six-month tour in Iraq — may be the first suicide in the US Air Force or Air National Guard by someone who served in Iraq, Air Force officials told the *Sunday News*.

"This is the first suicide we are aware of within a year of being deployed to Iraq," said Gary Pomeroy, spokesman for the Air Force Surgeon General, speaking of the death of Tech Sgt David Guindon.

"The level to which this is connected to service over there (Iraq) has yet to be determined," he noted.

No suicide note was found, Merrimack Deputy Police Chief Paul Stavenger said last week.

Authorities have learned information in connection with Guindon's death, however, that may shed some light on the local man's thoughts before he shot himself, Stavenger said.

"We're holding that information close to heart until we feel comfortable the investigation is over," Stavenger said.

Although he would not reveal the subject or the nature of the information, Stavenger said, "I can tell

you very safely that we don't know why (Guindon shot himself). We may never know why."

The 48-year-old man, who was married and had a daughter, died in his Merrimack home, Stavenger said.

Guindon's death is part of an increase in suicides among active Air Force personnel, according to data obtained from the US Air Force Surgeon General's Office.

Although the country is at war, there is no proven correlation between suicides and combat, said Lt Col Rick Campise, who heads the Air Force's suicide program.

"The ability to predict what causes suicide is in the stone age," he said.

Including Guindon, there have been 33 suicides of active reservists and Air Force personnel this calendar year, Campise said. According to the Air Force's data, the ratio of suicides so far this year is 13.6 suicides per 100,000 active Air Force personnel. — *Internet*

Sistani secures Iraq peace deal after bloody days

NAJAF, 28 Aug— Iraq's most revered Shi'ite leader persuaded a rebel cleric Thursday to accept a deal ending a three-week uprising in Najaf, after returning to the holy city amid bloody clashes that killed at least 74 people.

Iraqi Minister of State Kasim Daoud said the government had also agreed to the deal brokered by Sistani and would fund the reconstruction of Najaf.

"We are three-quarters toward the end of this crisis," said Hamed al-Khafaf, senior aide to Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani who entered Najaf in a huge convoy of vehicles earlier Thursday for talks with radical rival Muqtada al-Sadr.

He said Sadr, whose fighters have been holed up in the Imam Ali mosque and battling US and Iraqi forces in the alleys outside, agreed to all points of Sistani's peace plan to end fighting that has killed hundreds, driven oil prices to record highs and undermined Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's authority.

The plan involves Sadr's Mehdi Army militiamen leaving the sacred Imam Ali shrine by 10 am (0600 GMT) Friday. US forces are also to leave Najaf, with security being turned over to Iraqi police. Najaf is to be declared a weapons-free zone, and the gov-

ernment is to compensate victims of the fighting.

Khafaf said Sistani had also asked the Iraqi government to allow Shi'ite marchers to enter the sacred shrine. Tens of thousands of Shi'ites have converged on Najaf, heeding calls by Sistani and Sadr to march on the city.

Internet



An American soldier stands by as Iraqi police patrol the streets in the southern Iraqi city of Najaf on Friday, 27 Aug, 2004. — *INTERNET*

Iraqi government accepts Najaf peace agreement

BAGHDAD, 28 Aug—The interim government has accepted the peace agreement reached by top Shiite Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani and Moqtada al-Sadr to end the standoff in Najaf, Iraqi Minister of State Kasim Daoud said late Thursday.

"We have accepted the solution of peace that has been presented to us by his eminence Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani," Daoud told a news conference.

"Moqtada al-Sadr is free to go anywhere he likes and as far as I hear ... probably he will stay in his house in Najaf, but he is as free as any

Iraqi citizen to do whatever he likes," he said in English.

Sistani, Iraq's most influential Shiite leader reached a peace agreement with Sadr on Thursday to end the 22-day-old fighting in Najaf, only hours after he returned to the holy city from London where he received medical treatment.

Hamed al-Khafaf, a top aide to Sistani, said the peace agreement was a five-point plan asking Najaf and Kufa to be weapons-free cities, all foreign forces to withdraw from Najaf, and Iraqi forces take over security.

It urges the government to compensate victims of the clashes and a census to be

taken to prepare for democratic elections in January, Khafaf said.

Khafaf said Sistani had also asked the Iraqi government to allow Shiite marchers to enter the Imam Ali shrine.

Tens of thousands of Shiites have converged in Najaf, heeding calls by Sistani and Sadr.

Najaf Governor Adnan al-Zuhfa said Sistani's request had been accepted and unarmed Shiites could enter the shrine.

The US forces would leave Najaf once Sadr's Mehdi Army withdraws from the mosque area, he added.

MNA/Xinhua

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Cyclists protest "no more Bush"

NEW YORK, 28 Aug — Thousands of cyclists brought traffic in midtown Manhattan to a virtual standstill on Friday in the first significant protest ahead of the Republican convention at which President George W Bush will be nominated to run for a second White House term.

Thousands of cyclists swarmed down Broadway from Central Park in a parade stretching more than a mile on Friday evening — a time when the area is typically crowded with theatregoers and people out for dinner and drinks.

The protest lasted several hours, with many chanting "No more Bush", and was the first sizable demonstration ahead of the August 30-September 2 convention. Many locals in the mostly Democratic city stopped to applaud the cyclists as they

passed through a bustling Times Square.

At least 30 cyclists were detained and handcuffed at various locations along the route after small altercations between riders and motorists who were irritated at the congestion, according to Reuters witnesses.

The New York Police Department said it had no immediate information about arrests.

The event was mounted by a group called Critical Mass, which wants to boost the rights of cyclists in traffic-clogged city streets and holds its rides in cities around the world on the last Friday of each month.

More demonstrations are expected in the coming days.

The biggest anti-Bush protest is set for Sunday, when more than 200,000 are expected to march to decry the Bush Administration's economic policies, the war in Iraq and what they see as the erosion of civil liberties at home after the September 11, 2001 attacks.

The group organizing Sunday's march was denied a permit to rally in Central Park on the grounds such a large crowd would damage the grass. An unprecedented security effort has been put in place to protect the Republican convention after Washington said the event, and last month's Democratic convention in Boston, were possible terrorist targets.

MNA/Reuters



US Army soldiers withdraw from central Najaf, Iraq, to the outskirts of the city after a peace deal was reached on 27 Aug, 2004. — INTERNET

12 US soldiers wounded in separate Baghdad grenade attacks

BAGHDAD, 28 Aug—Twelve US soldiers were wounded in separate grenade attacks in central Baghdad on Friday, the US military said. Guerillas lobbed eight hand grenades at US soldiers at around 10:00 a.m. (0600 GMT), wounding five US soldiers.

Another attack took place an hour later when guerillas threw two hand grenades wounding five other soldiers, and a third attack 45 minutes after that left two more soldiers wounded.

As the soldiers finished their patrol at around 1:00 p.m., another two hand grenades were thrown, but no soldiers were wounded, the US military said.

Eight people were arrested in connection with the attacks, the military said, without specifying the exact location of the incident.

Meanwhile, witnesses said fighting broke out on Friday in Baghdad's Haifa Street neighbourhood, an area notorious as a haven for guerillas, with US armoured vehicles blocking streets and helicopters hovering overhead. Gunfire could be heard and columns of smoke were rising from the area, according to the witnesses. — MNA/Xinhua

Group warns Turkey over Iraq supplies

DUBAI, 28 Aug — An Islamist group has threatened to attack Turkish supplies to the US Army in Iraq if Turkey did not stop them, according to an Internet statement posted on Friday.

"We peacefully call on the Muslim Turkish Government and people to halt sending military equipment and aid to the invading forces via its border with Iraq ... if they don't respond to our demands then we will use special ways to stop the aid," said the statement signed by the Islamic Tawhid Group.

It was not possible to verify the authenticity of the statement.

Earlier this month, a group calling itself the Jordanian wing of Islamic Tawhid threatened to kill officials and foreigners in Jordan unless Amman stops sending truckloads of supplies to the US Army in Iraq within a week.

Several Islamist groups have issued Internet statements in recent weeks threatening nations that have troops in Iraq.

Militants in Iraq have also kidnapped several foreigners who were delivering supplies to the US-led multinational force in Iraq or who were contractors with the military. Some hostages have been released unharmed but at least nine have been killed. — MNA/Reuters

Indonesia, Australia try to resolve missile spat

JAKARTA, 28 Aug — Australia has briefed Indonesia on its plan to create the most lethal force of fighter jets in Southeast Asia, and Jakarta said on Friday it welcomed the effort to explain.

Australia announced on Thursday it would spend up to 450 million Australian dollars (319 million US dollars) to arm F/A-18 Hornet fighters and AP-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft with air-to-surface missiles capable of hitting targets up to 400 kilometres away, which would be installed between 2007 and 2009.

Indonesia, Australia's partner in anti-terror efforts which sits on its northern doorstep, had expressed concern about the plan and Canberra's failure to promptly explain its rationale.

"To build confidence and trust, it is never a mistake that these kinds of things are communicated to related par-

ties. Praise the Lord, after a 24-hour gap, a channel of communication has been provided today," Indonesian foreign affairs spokesman Marty Natalegawa told reporters on Friday.

"It is just natural for us to question to whom these weapons are directed to as the range is about 400 kilometres. We want to know the rationale behind this, whether it is meant for shooting fish in open sea or what," he said.

Few nations other than Indonesia are in the range of the missiles and a recent poll showed Australians think their biggest security threat comes from their northern neighbour.

MNA/Reuters

More representation sought for India in IMF

WASHINGTON, 28 Aug—Countries like India and China should be given more representation in the International Monetary Fund by reducing the influence of EU and G-7 nations, a former official with the lending agency has said.

Suggesting a major revamp in the agency, former IMF secretary Leo Van Houtven said the voting power and representation of European Union should be reduced.

"Emerging market countries such as Brazil, China, India and South Korea, whose importance in the world economy has grown enormously over recent decades, have fewer votes than many industrial countries whose economies are now smaller than theirs," he said.

Writing in *Finance and Development*, an IMF publication, he proposed reducing the number of directors of the EU to one from seven, which would automatically reduce the number of executive directors by six.

One change that would increase the quotas of developing countries as a group would be to use the gross domestic product data converted on the basis of Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) rather than market exchange rates, as is currently done.

By PPP calculations, Indian GDP is the fourth largest in the world, behind the US, China and Japan. Industrialized countries resist the use of PPP partly because of the central role of market exchange rates in the IMF's work, he said. — MNA/PTI



An American soldier makes his way out of a destroyed shop in the southern Iraqi city of Najaf on 27 Aug, 2004. INTERNET

Thousands of Shiites in Najaf shrine after peace deal

NAJAF (Iraq), 28 Aug— Thousands of chanting Iraqi Shiites entered a sacred shrine in Najaf on Friday where they were greeted by rebels who overnight reached a peace agreement to end a bloody three-week uprising.

The supporters of revered cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who brokered the peace deal, kissed the outer wall of the Imam Ali mosque before the militants allowed them in.

Sporadic shooting broke out nearby, but the cause was unclear.

Armed with AK-47 assault rifles, teenage fighters loyal to cleric Moqtada al-Sadr spilled over the alleyways leading to the gold-domed mosque. Some smiled and said to the visitors as they flowed in: "Welcome pilgrims to the shrine."

Late on Thursday, Sistani

persuaded Sadr to accept a deal ending the rebellion in Najaf, after returning to the holy city amid bloody clashes that killed at least 74 people.

Iraq's Government said it had also agreed to the deal, under which Sadr's Mehdi Army militia will leave the shrine and US forces will pull out of the city.

But after bitter fighting with US Marines that killed hundreds and in the wake of ferocious American bombardments, some Mehdi militants still wanted to vent their fury.

"We will support what-

ever Ayatollah Sistani and Sayyed Moqtada have agreed. But we will still slit the throats of the Americans," said one militiaman, Hussein Taama.

Sistani's supporters walked past dozens of pockmarked and destroyed buildings to reach the mosque just after dawn. Spent ammunition littered the city centre, which only a day earlier had been infested with snipers. A few men carted off a body.

Several American military humvees drove past, away from the shrine area as police appeared to be taking control.

"We pray today that Najaf will recover. The military operations have only brought destruction," said Kassem Hameed, a 52-year-old oil worker from the southern city of Basra who came to support Sistani, Iraq's most influential cleric.

Sistani aide Hamed al-Khafaf said Sadr had agreed to all points of the peace plan to end fighting that has driven oil prices to record highs and undermined interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi's authority. — MNA/Reuters

KGL says it has no presence in Iraq

NEW DELHI, 28 Aug — The Kuwaiti company KGL employing three Indians held hostage in Iraq on Friday said it had no presence in the war-ravaged country and asked the abductors to believe it and release the captives.

Responding to the abductors' statement Thursday night on dropping all demands but asking the company to end its operations in Iraq to ensure freedom of the hostages, KGL spokesperson Rana Abu-Zaineh said it was a "welcome" development and hoped for an early end to the over month-long crisis.

"We confirm we have no presence or operations in Iraq. They (abductors) should believe it and release the hostages," Zaineh told PTI over phone from Kuwait while reacting to the latest statement of the Iraqi militant group 'Islamic Secret Army - Holders of Black Banners'.

"It is for the abductors to believe us and we hope they will believe us," said Zaineh. She also conveyed the same message to the abductors through the Dubai-based news channel. The new development indicated efforts to secure release of the hostages were moving in a "promising direction", she said. — MNA/PTI

Kidnappers claim killing Italian hostage

DUBAI, 28 Aug — The kidnappers of Italian journalist Enzo Baldoni, taken hostage in Iraq, have said they have killed him, the Arabic language television channel Al-Jazeera reported on Thursday.

The station made the announcement in a scrolling text newsflash. There was no way to immediately verify the report.

A group called the Islamic Army in Iraq told Al-Jazeera television earlier it was holding Baldoni, who disappeared near Najaf several days ago.

The kidnappers were calling for Italy to withdraw its 2,700 troops from Iraq, the third largest foreign military contingent in the country. That is something Italy has refused to do.

As well as a reporter for Italian newspapers, Baldoni was volunteering for the Red Cross while in Iraq, his daughter, Gabriella

Baldoni, told Italian television on Wednesday.

"He was trying to save human lives in Najaf by helping a Red Cross convoy in a spirit of solidarity which has always underscored his thinking and his actions," she told RAI television.

Four other Italians have been taken hostage in Iraq since militants began employing the technique in April to pressure US allies and businesses to leave the country.

One of them, civilian security guard Fabrizio Quattrocchi, was shot dead. Three others were released unharmed.

MNA/Reuters



US Marines patrol central Najaf, Iraq, after a peace deal was reached on 27 Aug, 2004. — INTERNET

Militants free relative of Iraqi Minister

DUBAI, 28 Aug — Militants who had kidnapped two relatives of Iraqi Defence Minister Hazim al-Shalaan have released one of them, Al Jazeera television reported on Friday.

It said the group calling itself the "Bridgades of God's Anger" freed Salah Hassan Zeidan Lamie, a relative of Shalaan by marriage, after Iraqi police met their demand to release Ali Smeisim, an aide to rebel Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

There was no word on the other kidnapped man — a blood relative of Shalaan — who was captured by the group.

The militants had earlier demanded in a video aired on Al Jazeera on Wednesday that

US forces leave the holy city of Najaf, the scene of fierce clashes between Sadr's supporters and US forces.

The footage had shown the two men kneeling in front of masked militants, but no audio could be heard.

Militants have kidnapped scores of people to drive out individuals, companies and troops supporting US-led forces and the new Iraqi interim administration.

MNA/Reuters

China grants aid to ASEAN Summit

HANOI, 28 Aug — China has agreed to provide Laos with 13 million yuan worth of grant aid to support the upcoming summit of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), a source from Laos said on Thursday.

An agreement of grant assistance was signed on August 25 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Laos between Sayyakan Soulvong, head of the ASEAN Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Shen Yueming, assistant to the director-general of the Yunnan Corporation for In-

ternational Technology and Economic Cooperation of China.

The grant aid comprises five vans, five ambulances, 20 police cars and some safety inspection devices.

The grant aid is designed to aid Vientiane in hosting the 10th ASEAN Summit which will be held at the end

of this year.

It also aims to strengthen the existing ASEAN-China relations as well as the relations between China and Laos.

ASEAN groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

MNA/Xinhua

Visitor arrivals to Vietnam surge in first 8 months

HANOI, 28 Aug — Vietnam is estimated to receive roughly 1.9 million foreign visitors in the first eight months of this year, a year-on-year rise of 33.1 per cent, the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT) told Xinhua on Thursday.

The number of tourists surged the most by 48 per cent to over one million, followed by overseas Vietnamese returning home to visit relatives by 27.6 per cent to 324,000, and business visitors by 17.7 per cent to nearly 333,000.

In the eight-month period, the highest numbers of international arrivals to Vietnam came from Chinese Mainland, the United States, and Taiwan, reaching 520,000, nearly 188,000 and 166,000 respectively, posting year-on-year increases of 39 per cent, 29.7 per cent and 43 per cent.

Vietnam targets to host 2.7-2.8 million international arrivals and reap tourism revenues of 25 trillion Vietnamese dong (roughly 1.6 billion US dollars) this year, up 22.7-27.3 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. It plans to host 3-3.5 million foreign visitors, and gain tourism revenues of more than two billion dollars next year, VNAT deputy head, Pham Tu, said.

MNA/Xinhua

Oman's oil production up to 780,000 BPD in June

ABU DHABI, 28 Aug — Oil production of Oman grew to 780,000 barrels per day (BPD) in June, 2004, compared to 777,000 BPD in May, major Arab financial web site menafn.com reported Thursday.

The statistics released by the Oman Ministry of National Economy showed the total oil production of Oman fell slightly to reach 142.5 million barrels in the first half of 2004 from 150.7 million barrels in the same period of last year.

Average daily oil production was 783,000 BPD for the first half of 2004 from an average of 832,000 BPD during the same period of 2003.

Oman produces more than 740,000 BPD of oil and it is a non-member of the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC), said the web site. — MNA/Xinhua



US soldiers guard the area near the wreckage of a car bombing in the northern city of Mosul, Iraq on 27 Aug, 2004. The blast appeared to target a US military convoy moving through a traffic circle on the western edge of the city. At least 10 Iraqi civilians were wounded. — INTERNET



An Iraqi man views the shattered ceiling of his house after a rocket landed on it in the al-Mansour district in Baghdad, on 29 August, 2004.



Iraqis pick up some of the belongings left next to a puddle of blood after a mortar barrage hit a building in the Iraqi city of Kufa, Iraq on 26 August, 2004.



An Iraqi medic carries a wounded child after a mortar attack on a building in the Iraqi city of Kufa, at the hospital in Kufa, Iraq, on 26 August, 2004.



Iraqis check the damage following an overnight air strike in the flashpoint town of Fallujah, west of Baghdad on 29 August, 2004.

Images of Iraq



Iraqis inspect the remains of a car bomb after it exploded near a vehicle in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on 26 August, 2004.



Iraqi oil workers wait for fire fighting force to arrive at the scene of eight burning pipelines, 40 km south of Basra in southern Iraq on 26, August, 2004.



Self-reliance library in Magyihtoo village in Myothis Township, Magway Division. —IPRD

Libraries built to disseminate knowledge



The opening ceremony of a library in Phayehnbinsu model village in Mawlamyinegyun Township, Ayeyawady Division. —IPRD



Shepyithit Library was opened in Mothsoegwin Village-tract in Myaungmya Township, Ayeyawady Division. —IPRD



Villagers of Zegon Sanypa Village, Shwepyitha Township, Yangon Division are now able to read books in the library opened in their village. —IPRD



A library opened for bookworms of Magyiton Village in Wetlet Township, Sagaing Division.—KYEMON



Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein inspects cultivation of late-monsoon paddy in Barlar region.— MNA

Use of machines...

(from page 1)

And, the Secretary-2 inspected cultivation of late-monsoon paddy of the command. The commander reported on arrangements being made for cultivation of monsoon and summer paddy, pulses and beans, edible oil crops, vegetables and crops on commercial scale on the farmlands the whole year, greening of Barlar region, turning of wetlands into proper monsoon paddy fields and reclaiming of flooded farmlands for carrying out cultivation because of heavy rainfall in Yangon Division this month.

The Secretary-2, the commander and party saw over nurturing of Chainut 60 and Shwenatha 9 strains by applying modern technology.

Next, they viewed agricultural machinery manufactured by Shwe Tun Co Ltd. Managing Director U Win Naing briefed them on matters relating to the products.

In the briefing hall, the commander reported on farmlands of regiments and units in Barlar region and flooded areas.

Afterwards, the Secretary-2 met local farmers and heard reports on expense for cultivating one acres of monsoon and summer paddy and per-acre yield. He gave instructions on cultivation of high yield paddy, use of natural and chemical fertilizers and quality strain.

Chairman of Yangon North District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myat Min reported on cultivation matters.

Speaking on the occasion, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein said that due to heavy rains, some of the farm lands in Yangon Division were inundated. As the floods are receding, preparations should be made for cultivation of crops at the fields in time. Local authorities are going to render necessary assistance to farmers, who are required to make efforts to meet the division's monsoon paddy cultivation target of 1.2 million acres. The State's economic development depends on agriculture. As priority has been giving to intro-

Officials of the Myanma Agriculture Service and farmers will have to make collective efforts for effective implementing the four methods namely application of correct methods, increasing of crop yield, utilization of quality strains and chemical and natural fertilizers, and extension of sown acreage. The State laid down the four political objectives, the four economic objectives and the four social objectives and is implementing them for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

ducing mechanized farming, farmers will have to use more farm machinery to reduce cost and cut cultivation time. They also need to pay special attention to minimizing wastage. As building of an industrial nation is needed for national economic progress, industrial zones have been set up in various parts of the nation and the private sectors have been given encouragement in all sectors. The zones are manufacturing and distributing farm machinery, and the Agriculture and Irrigation Ministry and Industry-2 Ministry are also producing farm machinery. Use of machines in the entire farming work will cut cultivation time and reduce labour and cost, leading to further improving the living standard of peasants. Thus, farmer should use more farm equipment.

Officials of the Myanma Agriculture Service and farmers will have to make collective efforts for effective implementing the four methods namely application of correct methods, increasing of crop yield, utilization of quality strains and chemical and natural fertilizers, and extension of sown acreage. The State laid down the four political objectives, the four economic objectives and the four social objectives and is implementing them for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation.

The seven-point future policy programme of the State has already been laid down and, the convening of the National Convention, the first step of the policy programme

is in progress. A portion of the National Convention has already been implemented successfully at present. There are three basic requirements in the process of transition to modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation, and they are State peace and stability and the rule of law; a robust national economy, sufficiency in food, clothing and shelter needs and improving of living standard; and the high intellectual standard, the efficiency of consideration and human qualification. Only if the nation can fulfill the requirements, will it be able to reach a modern and developed democratic nation, the goal of the people. The agricultural sector plays a meaningful role in ensuring a robust economy. Thus, harmonious efforts are required for strengthening the national economy.

Next, the farmers from Barlar region reported on requirements in cultivation tasks. Division Manager of Myanma Agriculture Service U Aung Hsan reported on assistance provided for timely cultivation of late-monsoon paddy in Yangon Division, educative talks given to local farmers for use of correct cultivation methods, quality strains and natural chemical fertilizers, cultivation of edible oil crops and other crops in addition to monsoon and summer paddy. Managing Director U Tun Than of MAS gave a supplementary report.

Next, the Secretary-2 attended to their needs and left there.— MNA

Chosen site for new vest factory inspected

YANGON, 29 Aug — Myanmar Textile Industries Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thuang, accompanied by officials, inspected the site chosen for construction of a vest factory of the

place located at a safe dis-

tance from farmland and making comprehensive survey for water supply to the factory.

Next, member of the Secretariat of the Union

Solidarity and Development Association and Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thuang and wife attended the third prize presentation ceremony in Manikinsana hall in

Myingyan at 7.30 am. On the occasion, the minister presented awards to Ma Khin Nyein Chan, who won six distinctions at the matriculation examination of 2003-2004 academic year. He also presented awards to those who won five and four distinctions. Next, officials gave away prizes to students winning distinctions ranging from four to one. The minister also presented awards to 73 teachers.

At 10 am, the minister met villagers at the hall of Htanaungtaing BEHS in Myingyan township. On the occasion, the chairman of the school board of trustees expressed his thanks towards the government for upgrading the school from an affiliated one to independent one.

Next, the minister urged

local people to render their cooperation in social welfare tasks in harmony with authorities concerned in implementing the five rural development tasks. Later, the minister handed over K 1 million donated by staff of the ministry for construction of a two-storey school building at the school.

The minister also met teachers and townsenders at a pandal in front of Yathit BEHS in Taungtha township. At the get-together, the minister called for concerted efforts to promote educational standard and handed over K 3 million donated by wellwishers and staff of the ministry for extension of the school. The minister also presented sports gear to be used at the school and gifts to the teachers.

MNA



USDA Secretariat Member Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thuang meets USDA members, teachers, departmental officials and local people in Myingyan.— INDUSTRY-1

Provisions donated to monasteries ...

(from page 16)

East District and South Okkalapa Township PDCs, member of Yangon City Development Committee Col Tin Soe, rice by the YCDC, Secretary U Myo Aung, rice by Myanmar Fisheries Federation, an official, rice by Township Union Solidarity and Development Committee, an official, edible oil and soap by the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd, officials, iodized salt and soft salt boxes by Myanma Salt and Marine Chemicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Mines and Yangon Division Salt Factory Entrepreneurs Association, Deputy Director-General Dr Myat Myat Ohn Khin, traditional medicines by the department and traditional medicine houses, and wellwishers, rice to the members of the Sangha.

Afterwards, Tatmadaw families presented K 170,00 to the monasteries; Yangon Division PDC, K 51,000; U Bo Hsai (Chairman of South Okkalapa Industrial Zone), K 1.3 million; South Okkalapa Industrial Zone, K 1,000,500; U Aung Myat (Mother Trading Co Ltd), Managing Director of Grade Nine Construction Co Ltd U Aik Lin, Naing Group Construction and Cherry Oo Watch Shop, and U Tin Win-Daw San San Win of Myanmar Pyi Thar Hei Co, K 300,000 each; traditional physician U Bo Gyi-Daw Htay Htay Nyunt and family, Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry President U Win Myint, Great Wall Traditional Embrocation House family, and Yangon East District and Township PDCs, K 200,000 each; Sandi Traditional Medicine (U Thein Maung)-Daw Par Par, K 150,090; U Than Naing-Daw Kyi Kyi Swe and family of Thamada Thingan House, K 120,000; U Tin Aung-Daw Hla Hla Nwe of Win Yadana Travelling Agency, 108,000; Myanmar Rice Merchants Association; Myanmar Edible Oil Merchants Association, U Aung Mon-Daw Hla Hla Mon (Myint Myat Paddy Trading), U Tint Hsan (ACE Construction), Dr Win Zaw (Lizstar Enterprise Co Ltd), Dr Moe Tin, U Ko Ko Lat-Daw Tin Tin May (Kyi Tha



Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe accepts cash donation from a wellwisher at the ceremony to donate cash and kind to monasteries in Dagon Township.

— MNA

Jewellery Shop, Thingangyun), Thiri Thudamma Manizawtadara U Sein Hla Win (Sein & Hsan Co), U Khin Zaw (Nine Tigers Car Tyres Production), U Pye Hlaing of Silver Shine Co Ltd, and Youths Sasana Hita Neikbansaw Association, K 100,000 each; U Myo Aung-Daw Khin Yi Mon (Hsan Myint Myanmar Co), K 80,000; medical staff of South Okkalapa Township, K 59,000; U Than Maung-Daw Ngwe Kyi and family of Chan Mye Store, K 54,000; Saya U Shwe Hmyar-Daw Khin Yon (traditional physician), Kay Thi Pan U Kyi Soe (Kay Thi Pan Traditional Medicine), U Tun Shwe and family of Tun Shwe Wah traditional medicine house, Myanmar Sesamum Merchants' Association, South Okkalapa Township Rice Merchants' Association, U Zaw Aung and family of No 1045, Thumingala Street, Ward 4, Daw Than Sein and family of 806, Saga 19th Street, Ward 4, Daw Li Li Khaing and family of 1260, 3rd Street, Ward 6, U Myo Aye-Daw Htwe Htwe and family of 307, Thumingala Street, Ward 7, U Hson Min-Daw Than Yee and family of 296, Thit Sar Street, Ward 10, Daw Hla Kyi and family of Thit Sar Street, Ward 10, Awaia Clinic family of Myitta Street, Ward 10, K 50,000 each. The Secretary-2, the commander, the minister, the deputy minister and senior military officers accepted the donations. Lt-Col Ne Win supplicated on the donation to the Sayadaws. The Sayadaw of Ngwe Kya Yan Monastery delivered a sermon, followed by sharing of merits gained.

Today's donations amounted to 433 rice bags, 160 viss of edible oil, 300 viss of gram, 1,640 viss of iodized salt, 6,364 different kinds of traditional medicine boxes,



State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein presents offertories to a Sayadaw at the ceremony to donate cash and kind to monasteries in South Okkalapa Township. — MNA

328 boxes of soft salt, 3,280 bars of Padomma soap and K 8,964,590.

A similar ceremony took place for Dagon Pariyatti Monastery, Dekkhinayon Monastery and Kyaku Monastery in Dagon Township this afternoon at Kyaku Monastery on Shwedagon Pagoda Road, attended by the Secretary-2.

It was also attended by the Chairman Sayadaw of Dagon Township Sangha Nayaka Committee and members of the Sangha, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister Maj-Gen Sein Htwa, Minister Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung, senior military officers, departmental heads, local authorities, officials, members of social and religious associations, wellwishers and guests. Chairman of Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Kaba Aye Monastery Sayadaw Bhaddanta Revata administered the Five Precepts to the congregation. The Secretary-2, the commander, the minister and senior military officers presented alms to the Sayadaws. Vice-Adjutant-General Brig-Gen Hla Shwe, Commodore Maw Thein and Lt-Col Chan Maung presented rice, edible oil and gram donated by Tatmadaw families to members of the Sangha. Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and YCDC Member Col Tin Soe, Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Myint Maung presented rice donated by SPDC, Ministry of Religious Affairs and YCDC respectively. Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd donated 38 viss of edible oil and 830 soap bars; Myanma Salt and Marine Chemicals Enterprise and Yangon Division Salt Millers' Association 415 viss of iodized salt and 81 tubes tooth paste; Traditional Medicine Department of the Ministry of Health 100 boxes of traditional medicine; traditional medicine houses traditional medicines and other wellwishers rice bags.

Next, Secretary-2 Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers and the vice adjutant-general accepted the cash donations for the monasteries by wellwishers including families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), Yangon Division PDC, Yangon West District PDC and Dagon Township PDC.

Lt-Col Chan Maung of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Air) supplicated the purpose of the donations made by families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air). Afterwards, Dagon Township Sangha Nayaka Presiding Sayadaw Bhaddanta Revata



Minister for SWRR Maj-Gen Sein Htwa accepts cash donation from a wellwisher at the ceremony to donate cash and kind to monasteries in Dagon Township. — MNA

administered the sermons followed by sharing of merits gained. A total of 122 bags of rice, over 40 viss of edible oil, 81 viss of pulses and beans, 415 viss of iodized salt, 81 tubes of tooth paste and 1934 boxes of traditional medicines and over K 3 million were donated today. MNA

Commander, Minister meet entrepreneurs, farmers, departmental officials in Sagaing Division

YANGON, 29 Aug—Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of the North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, together with Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone and officials, yesterday afternoon, arrived at the pest control centre in Ohndaw village, Sagaing Township. Sagaing Division and met entrepreneurs and farmers engaged in wheat cultivation and departmental officials.

The minister gave instructions and urged farmers and departmental officials to cooperate with entrepreneurs for regional development, for acquisition of techniques and for boosting the per acre yield. Next, farmers who are engaged in wheat cultivation reported on cultivation and production of wheat in the division and measures being taken for extended cultivation of wheat to the commander who fulfilled requirements.

In the afternoon, the commander and party attended the work coordination meeting held at the Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Office in Monywa. The commander made a speech on the occasion.

Afterwards, the minister gave necessary instructions to entrepreneurs, departmental officials and farmers. The minister together with Managing Director U Min Hla Aung of Myanma Agricultural Produce Trading this morning met departmental personnel at the Divisional Manager's Office in Monywa and gave necessary instructions.

In the afternoon, the minister and party arrived at Bawdhitataung Buddha Kyaungdaw in Monywa where they paid homage to Bawdhitataung Sayadaw Agga Maha Saddhammajotika Bhaddanta Narada and presented offertories to him. — MNA

Energy Deputy Minister leaves for Thailand

YANGON, 29 Aug—Deputy Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Than Htay left here by air this morning to attend Conference on Biofuel to be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

He was seen off at the airport by Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi, heads of department and his families.

The deputy minister was accompanied by Director (Admin) of Myanma Petrochemical Enterprise U Thaug Myint. — MNA

Combating micronutrient deficiencies

Dr Hla Kyi

Malnutrition literally means bad nutrition and it encompasses both under-nutrition and over-nutrition. In this sense, no country in the world is free from the problem of malnutrition. Under-nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies constitute major nutritional problems in the developing countries while obesity and diet-related chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart diseases prevail in the developed countries. With rapid economic development and associated lifestyle changes, including consumption of fatty foods and sedentary nature of work, obesity and diet-related diseases are emerging in some developing countries as a public health problem. In other words, these countries are bearing the double burden of under-nutrition and over-nutrition.

Just like other developing countries, Myanmar has been fighting against three micro nutrient problems, namely iodine deficiency disorder (IDD), vitamin A deficiency (VAD) and iron deficiency anaemia (IDA). The Nutrition Promotion Week campaign of this year aims to eliminate iodine deficiency disorders and vitamin A deficiency and, reduction of iron deficiency anaemia.

Iodine deficiency

Iodine deficiency is one of the common causes of preventable brain damage among children. A baby born to an iodine-deficient mother may be mentally retarded, deaf, dumb, stunted and unable to walk at all. Less severely affected children may be slow in learning and bad at school performance. In adults, iodine deficiency manifests itself as a swelling in front of the neck due to the enlargement of thyroid gland which is known by medical professionals as goitre and lay people as "big neck". Iodine deficiency can adversely affect the socioeconomic status of families and communities by decreasing work capacity and productivity of people. Making salt fortified with iodine available for human and animal consumption throughout the country is known as universal salt iodization (USI). It has been proved to be an affordable and effective strategy for fighting iodine deficiency in a number of countries.

Some nursing mothers also restrain themselves from eating a variety of food for fear of causing harm to the baby. In fact, they need to eat a variety of nutritious food to keep themselves well nourished and to provide adequate nutrition for the baby through breast milk. Weakness, numbness, angular stomatitis, sore tongue etc are signs of malnutrition and deficiency of vitamins which result from avoidance of nutritious foods during pregnancy and lactation.

Myanmar has adopted the USI strategy with the aim of eliminating iodine deficiency by 2005. Proportion of households consuming iodized salt increased from 11% in 1994 to more than 86% in 2004. As a result, goitre rate dramatically dropped from 33% to 5.5% during the same period. Myanmar Iodine Deficiency Disorders Elimination Programme is aimed to achieve the objective of 90% iodized salt consumption rate in 2005. It has also made plans to ensure that all salt contains adequate amount of iodine for providing full protection against brain damage. Routine testing of iodine content in salt is done by Myanmar Salt & Marine Chemicals Enterprise under the Ministry of Mines at the factory level and by midwives of the Ministry of Health at the household level. In the Nutrition Promotion Week, health staff will check the iodine content in salt at wholesale and retail shops with the help of persons from Yangon City Development Committee, Mandalay City Development Committee and Development Affairs Department.

Under-nutrition and micro nutrient deficiencies constitute major nutritional problems in the developing countries while obesity and diet-related chronic diseases including diabetes, hypertension and coronary heart diseases prevail in the developed countries. With rapid economic development and associated lifestyle changes, including consumption of fatty foods and sedentary nature of work, obesity and diet-related chronic diseases are emerging in some developing countries as a public health problem.

Vitamin-A deficiency

Vitamin-A deficiency used to be one of the common causes of preventable blindness among children in the developing world. The deficiency also impairs the body defense system leading to increased susceptibility of infections and higher risks of death. During the last decade, regular Vitamin-A supplementation programmes saved the sight and lives of thousands of children from many developing countries.

The Ministry of Health has been distributing high-potency vitamin A capsules to children between 6 months and 5 years of age since early 1990s. It is one of the regular functions of health staff to deliver vitamin A capsules in March and September every year. More than eight per cent of children all over the country receive vitamin A capsules through the routine distribution system. Coverage of vitamin A supplementation markedly increased when it was integrated with polio vaccination on the National Immunization Days of the years from 2000 through 2002. Vitamin A coverage was high in 2003 when supplementation was done during the Nutrition Promotion Week because of the support provided by local authorities, government departments, non-governmental organizations and the community itself.

Today, clinical vitamin A deficiency is no longer a public health problem in Myanmar. Blindness due to vitamin A deficiency has become very rare. But, regular vitamin A supplementation for children is needed to continue because it can improve the immune function of the body. Children who regularly receive vitamin A supplementation can resist infection more powerfully and are less likely to die of communicable diseases. In order for all children to enjoy these benefits, parents and child caregivers are requested to bring their kids to the nearest health centre and let them receive vitamin A capsules.

Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months of life assures adequate vitamin A supply for them, provided that mothers regularly consume vitamin A rich foods. Vitamin A content in breast milk significantly rises if the mother takes one capsule of high-potency of vitamin A (200,000 international unit) within one month after childbirth. After six months of age, all children should be gradually introduced to vitamin A-rich foods including liver, eggs, dark green leafy vegetables, yellow fruits, roots and vegetables such as mango, papaya, yellow pumpkin, sweet potato and beet root.

Iron deficiency anaemia

Iron deficiency is the most common cause of nutritional anaemia. In 2001, the World Health Organization estimated that about 52% of pregnant women in the developing countries were anaemic. Children and women of reproductive age are also at risk.

Anaemic women cannot work as hard as ordinary people. They are more likely to have complications during pregnancy and childbirth and maternal deaths

All this needs to be known

- * Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
- * Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
- * Do not be softened whenever appeased

are more common among them. They also tend to have babies with low birth weight.

Meat and liver are rich in iron which is readily absorbed in the gut. Cereals, peas and dark green leaves also contain some iron but it is not easily absorbed in the gut. As Myanmar women eat cereals and plant foods more frequently than animal products, it is strongly recommended that all adolescent girls and women take iron tablets biweekly to prevent iron deficiency. Pregnant women should take the supplement daily.

Distribution of iron tablets to pregnant women has been a routine function of midwives in Myanmar for more than two decades. But not all pregnant women are taking the tablets regularly. Some women do not bother to take iron tablets just because they are not aware of the dangers of anaemia and the benefits of taking iron tablets. Distribution of iron tablets to pregnant women is included in the Nutrition Promotion Week activities in order to increase public awareness of iron deficiency anaemia.

Anaemic children are likely to suffer infectious diseases more frequently and more severely because their body defense mechanism is weak. They are slow in learning and thus, bad at school performance because of impaired cognitive development and poor concentration power.

Babies are usually born with significantly large stores of iron in the body. Iron deficiency anaemia is rare among exclusively breastfed babies during their first six months of age. So they do not need any iron supplementation during this period. Oral iron supplements may even enhance multiplication of pathogenic bacteria in the infant's gut and cause gastrointestinal diseases. But after the sixth month of age, when body stores are depleted, babies should be given iron-rich foods such as meat and liver as well as iron-containing syrup to prevent anaemia.

Eat variety of nutritious foods

In every developing country, mothers and children are the most vulnerable to micronutrient deficiencies. Myanmar is not an exception. One of the reasons is that a number of nutritious foods are denied to them. Some pregnant women refuse to eat nutritious foods for fear of getting a big baby which may lead to a difficult labour. Some foods are avoided for fear of causing harm to the baby in the womb. In fact, these are wrong beliefs. Women need to eat a variety of food as much as they can during pregnancy in order to keep themselves healthy and let their babies inside the womb grow normally.

Some nursing mothers also restrain themselves from eating a variety of food for fear of causing harm to the baby. In fact, they need to eat a variety of nutritious foods to keep themselves well nourished and to provide adequate nutrition for the baby through breast milk. Weakness, numbness, angular stomatitis, sore tongue etc. are signs of malnutrition and deficiency of vitamins which result from avoidance of nutritious foods during pregnancy and lactation. Some nursing mothers who practice too much restriction of foods suffer from tingling, numbness, muscle pain and muscle weakness due to deficiency of vitamin B1. Babies feeding on the breast milk of these mothers suffer from a disease known as infantile beri beri which may lead to heart failure and sudden death around the age of 2-4 months.

Wrong belief such as "Fish and meat cause worms", "Fruits cause loose motion", "Vegetables cause abdominal pain" etc. are common reasons for denial of nutritious foods to young children in some communities. In fact, worm infestations are due to poor personal hygiene and bad sanitation.

Fish and meat, which are good sources of protein, should be given to children as much as family can afford. In fact, diarrhea is most common due to unhygienic foods and unsafe water. Fruits and vegetables, which are rich in vitamins and minerals, should be given to children daily.

In conclusion, I would like to urge all families to consume iodized salt; all parents and child caregivers to bring their children to the health centres to receive vitamin A capsules; all women of reproductive age to take iron tablets regularly; all babies under six months to be exclusively breastfed; and people of all ages to eat a variety of nutritious food.

China beefs up prevention and control of contagious disease

BEIJING, 29 Aug — China's top legislature on Saturday passed the revised version of Law on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases, which requires that the government guarantee funds for infectious disease prevention. The revised law was passed at the 11th session of the 10th Standing Committee of National People's Congress (NPC), which concluded Saturday morning. The central government shall provide aid to major projects in areas that cannot support their own and to poor people infected with disease who cannot afford treatment, according to the law. Lack of adequate funds undermined contagious disease prevention and control capabilities of organizations entrusted with the tasks," Vice-Minister of Health Gao Qiang once said. "Due to the lack of

money, some patients could not receive timely, effective and formal treatment and became new sources of infection." The law stipulates that governments of various levels should strengthen prevention and control of AIDS and take measures to prevent the spread of the disease. This is the first time that AIDS is specifically targeted in the law. The revised law also includes clauses that require blood donation centres and biological product companies to strictly abide by regulations of the state. This will guarantee the quality of blood and blood products. Statistics show that among the reported AIDS cases in China, 11 per cent were infected in the processes of having blood drawn or blood transmissions. According to estimates of experts, there are 840,000 people infected with AIDS/

HIV in China. The law also rules out discrimination against people infected with contagious diseases, people carrying the pathogen of a contagious disease and people who are suspected of having a contagious disease.

In general, the law underscores prevention and early-warning of contagious diseases and isolation of patients of contagious disease. It puts greater responsibility on medical institutions to monitor the spread of contagious diseases and prevent infection inside hospitals. China has established a four-level disease prevention and control system starting from the county level up to the prefecture, province and state levels, with a staff of 288,000 people. By 2003, the incidence of contagious diseases in China had fallen to 182 in 100,000 people.

MNA/Xinhua

Philippines expects to enhance bilateral relations with China

MANILA, 29 Aug — The Philippines is expecting a very fruitful state visit of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to China, with the expected signing of agreements on tourism, energy, fisheries and infrastructure between the two countries. "China, Japan and the United States have a determining influence in the security situation — and economic evolution — of East Asia. This is the first of eight realities that currently shape the foreign policy of the Philippines," said Philippine Press Secretary and Presidential Spokesman Ignacio Bunye in a joint interview by Xinhua and other Chinese media Friday. "The President thinks China is a very important neighbour and partner to the Philippines," Bunye said.

"The destinies of China and the Philippines — geographically, politically, economically, and culturally — are so closely intertwined," he said. The hybrid rice technology borrowed from China is responsible for doubling, sometimes tripling, Philippine domestic rice yields per hectare, Bunye said, adding that this time Arroyo expects to bring home hybrid corn technology which will further boost our efforts to achieve food sufficiency.

"China is helping us with the North Rail project, once completed, it will not only facilitate the transport of people and goods but will also ultimately result in the decongestion of Metro Manila," Bunye said.

"Still to be tapped in the huge tourist market, with the economic boom in China, an estimated 600 million, or roughly half of its 1.3 billion population, are potential tourists," he added. Likewise, he said, the Philippines is expecting to discuss the problem of anti-drug trafficking cooperation with China and the country is working to push forward the signing of the early harvest agreement of the ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations)-China Free Trade Area. — MNA/Xinhua



SWIMMING COMPETITIONS: The Swimming Championships (2004) were held at the National Swimming Pool on U Wisara Road in Yangon on 29 August. Myanmar Swimming Federation President Dr Khin Shwe presents the championship trophy to the Ministry of Sports (A) team. — NLM



The Japanese Buddhist mission being welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko.

MNA

Japanese Buddhist mission arrives

YANGON, 29 Aug — A Japanese Buddhist mission led by Ven Hiroshi Fujikura, Secretary General of the Buddhist Summit Nenbutsushu Buddhist Sect of Japan, arrived here by air this evening to attend the Preliminary Coordination Meeting on the Fourth World Buddhist Summit to be held in Myanmar.

The Japanese delegation was welcomed at Yangon International Airport by Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, Adviser U Arnt Maung, Director-General of the Religious Affairs Department Dr Myo Myint, Director-General of the Department for Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana U Sann Lwin, Pro-Rector (Admin) of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Dr Myint Kyi, and officials. The Japanese delegation comprised 24 members. — MNA

India to raise issue of premium on crude oil with OPEC

NEW DELHI, 29 Aug — India's Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said Friday India will raise the issue of OPEC countries charging a premium on crude oil it sells to developing countries at the oil cartel's ministerial meeting next month. "One of the themes which I intend to focus on in my address to the Organization of Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC) on September 17 is the Asian premium," the Press Trust of India quoted Aiyar as saying.

OPEC charges one US dollar a barrel premium on supplies it makes to India when compared to the price at which it sells to the United States and Europe.

There is solidarity among Asian countries, he said.

OPEC has invited India to present the developing nation's perspective on international oil prices at its meeting in Vienna next month.

Aiyar will also voice concern at the runaway international oil prices, which have crossed the 21-year-old high. India is one of the fastest growing oil consumers in the world and imports 70 per cent of its crude oil needs.

It imported 90.83 million tons in 2003-04 for 18.36 billion US dollars. — MNA/Xinhua

Senior PLA officer says China-Australia military cooperation active

BEIJING, 29 Aug — Liang Guanglie, Chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), Friday described the exchanges and cooperation between the two armies in recent years as active.

Liang, also member of the Central Military Commission, held talks with visiting Australian Chief Commander of the Defence Forces Peter Cosgrove. He said the Chinese and Australian Armed Forces maintain frequent high-level visits and contacts over the past few years, with seven defence and strategic consultations held and active exchanges carried out in such fields as warship visits, training, logistics, and college education.

China attaches great importance to friendly cooperation with Australia and is willing to make efforts to promote relations between the two countries and the two armies, Liang said.

Cosgrove said the relationship between the Australian Armed Forces and the Chinese PLA has developed well in recent years, expressing his hope for furthering exchanges and cooperation with China, which he called beneficial to both sides.

Cosgrove and his delegation arrived here Friday morning on an official goodwill visit to China at the invitation of Liang. — MNA/Xinhua

Boat capsizes in Vietnam

HANOI, 29 Aug —

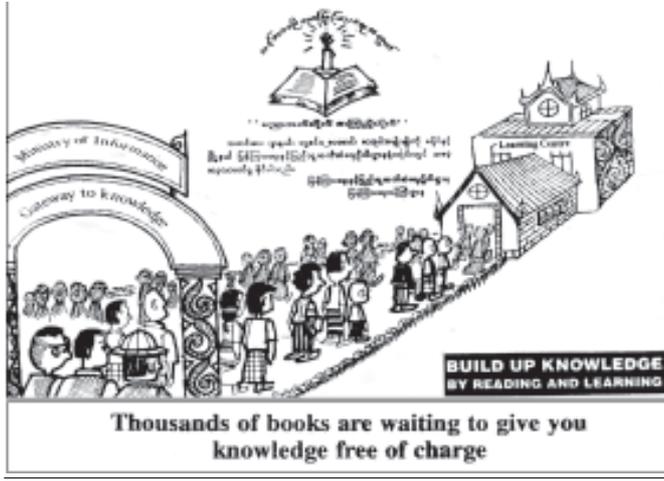
Fifteen people died or went missing after their boat capsized on Thursday on Cua Luc River in Vietnam's northern border province of Quang Ninh, Vietnam News Agency reported on Friday.

The accident happened when the wooden boat with 18 people on board was hit by a strong whirlwind accompanied by heavy rain. Only three of them have been rescued. MNA/Xinhua

59 companies join WWF HK Corporate Membership

HONG KONG, 29 Aug — World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Hong Kong presented Friday awards to 59 companies who have joined or renewed the WWF Corporate Membership to help protect natural environment. The Corporate Membership Programme was launched in 2000 to engage the business community in protecting the precious natural environment. Since its inception, the membership has grown from 35 to 59. Four categories of corporate membership are offered, namely the Double Diamond, Diamond, Gold and Silver Membership with different levels of contribution and support. Being committed to protecting natural environment, WWF as a platform of environment protection needs continued support from the society.

MNA/Xinhua



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Deputy General Manager

Supply Department, Myanma Railways, Botataung, Yangon

US to test new air passenger screening programme

WASHINGTON, 28 Aug—The US Government unveiled plans on Thursday for a revised computer-based programme using personal information to identify airline passengers who may pose a threat to air travel.

While the Transportation Security Administration said it had addressed controversial elements of passenger pre-screening, key aspects of the new plan, called Secure Flight, have yet to be worked out.

The new system, to begin tests this fall, will replace the Computer Assisted Passenger Pre-Screening programme which was suspended this summer after consumer protest, legal challenges and embarrassing revelations about how passenger data were obtained.

"We're now keen to move forward," David Stone, administrator of the Transportation Security Administration, told reporters.

The government hopes to refine the programme during 2005. — MNA/Reuters

DONATE BLOOD

China crushes 198 narcotics-making sites in 55 days

BEIJING, 28 Aug — One hundred and ninety-eight illegal narcotics labs were destroyed by the Chinese police from July 1 to August 24, with 263 drug-selling gangs shut down, the *People's Daily* quoted the Ministry of Public Security as saying.

A total of 5,565 suspects have been arrested and drugs weighing 5,041 kilogrammes have been confiscated during the period, the report noted. During the January-June period, 26,049 suspects were arrested by the Chinese police with 4,931 kilogrammes of heroin, 1,941 kilogrammes of methamphetamine hydrochloride, also known as "ice", and more than 220,000 amphetamines, called "shaking head pills", said the paper. — MNA/Xinhua

Centennial hospital donates funds to AIDS-hit area

ZHENGZHOU, 28 Aug—The centennial Henan Provincial People's Hospital donated 500,000 yuan (60,240 US dollars), originally budgeted to pay for a celebration to commemorate the 100th anniversary of its founding, to AIDS-hit Shangcai County Thursday to boost local efforts in prevention and control of the epidemic.

"There won't be any ceremonial commemoration activities. We've donated the 500,000 yuan that was originally budgeted as a special purpose fund for the celebration because we want to do something more concrete and practical," said Li Junxiu, president of the hospital.

The fund will help expand 10 village-run clinics and upgrade the overall medical facilities in the county, said Nie Yong, deputy head of Shangcai County in the southwestern part of the central China province.

The hospital has also sent several teams of doctors to rural areas this year to provide free medical consulting, examinations and treatment to the needy farmers in the province, and it launched academic exchanges with other hospitals to improve its overall

strength. Founded in 1904, the Henan Provincial People's Hospital developed from a small mission hospital into a leading hospital with the best facilities, technologies and services in the province. The largely agricultural Henan Province, China's most populous, became the site of one of the country's worst AIDS outbreaks. A large number of farmers there were infected after selling blood to illegal dealers and having HIV-infected blood pumped back into them, before 1995. The poverty-stricken Shangcai County, with a population of one million, had suffered most from the epidemic, which orphaned about 700 children.

MNA/Xinhua



Cambodian PM welcomes more Chinese investors

PHNOM PENH, 28 Aug—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Friday that the royal government of Cambodia welcomes more Chinese companies to invest in Cambodia in order to further strengthen the traditional friendship between the two countries and to promote the development of the country.

Hun Sen made the remarks during his meeting with visiting President of Chinese Tianshi Group Li Jinyuan.

The Premier highly praised the great achievements made by Chinese Government since it carried out the opening-up policy put forward by China's late leader Deng Xiaoping.

However, he said that China's development has not only contributed to maintain the peace and stability of the world and the region, but

also promote the development and prosperity of its neighbouring countries.

Hun Sen said that the relationship between Cambodia and China has developed and further strengthened in an all-round way in recent years. He expressed his warm welcome to more Chinese enterprises like Tianshi Group to invest in Cambodia, promising that the government will offer supports and facilities for them.

MNA/Xinhua

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Singapore, Malaysia discuss sea marshals aboard

SINGAPORE, 28 Aug—Singapore and neighbouring Malaysia are now discussing the possibility of placing sea marshals on ships passing through the Straits of Malacca as part of their efforts to protect the world's busiest waterway from piracy and terror attacks.

This was revealed by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Tony Tan Friday while attending the launching ceremony of a book outlining the island state's strategies in the fight against terror. Tan, also coordinating minister for security and defence, said that during his talks with Malaysian Prime

Minister Abdullah Badawi and Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak last month, both men were very keen to see how the two countries can further strengthen security in the straits, possibly by moving from coordinated patrols to having some security presence on ships passing through the vital straits.

"The talks are going on now and I think that we will see further development in this area," Tan added.

The Straits of Malacca is a narrow waterway separating Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. About half of the world's oil supplies move through the straits, as well as one quarter of the world's overall trade.

MNA/Xinhua

Belgium identifies remains of WW1 British soldier

BEUSSELS, 28 Aug—Belgium has identified the remains of a British soldier who was killed nearly 90 years ago on the World War I battlefields of western Flanders.

The body was that of Private John Robert Thompson, a soldier in the second battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, an official from the western town

of Zonnebeke told Reuters on Friday.

Thompson's body, along with the remains of two other unidentified soldiers, was discovered in a private garden six years ago.

Belgian researchers were able to identify Thompson from his initials, carved on the blade of a knife, and a badge identifying his military unit. DNA from two of his relatives later confirmed his identity, the spokesman said.

Thompson was killed on October 4, 1917, during the battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres. More than 500,000 Allied and German soldiers were killed or wounded during the battle, which lasted from July to November of that year, the spokesman said.

Thompson will be buried with military honours at a nearby cemetery in October.

Germans become poorer, living standards drop

BERLIN, 28 Aug—Poverty levels in Germany are increasing, and greater discrepancy in wealth distribution is expected in coming years, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* newspaper reported on Friday.

The report cited a survey released by the Federal Statistics Office as saying that at the end of 2002, 11.1 per cent of Germans lived in relative poverty, earning less than half of average income compared with 9.4 per cent a year earlier. In eastern Germany, Germans living in relative poverty have doubled in the past 10 years, the survey showed.

Referring to living standards, Germany has also slipped into Europe's mid-field, the report concluded.

Germans were also among the least satisfied people in the 15 European countries surveyed in the European Union before the accession of the 10 recent entrants, said the report. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Reuters

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Chelsea makes four wins in four games

LONDON, 29 Aug — Chelsea made it four wins from four Premier League games with a 2-1 victory over Southampton, but Manchester United needed a stoppage-time equalizer to draw 1-1 with 10-man Blackburn Rovers on Saturday.

Southampton striker James Beattie scored at both ends at Stamford Bridge, putting his side ahead after just 12 seconds and following up with a 34th minute own goal before England midfielder Frank Lampard converted a 41st minute penalty. Action was continuing with the late kick-off at Carrow Road between promoted Norwich City and champions Arsenal, who were looking to extend a record-breaking 43-match unbeaten run in the league. — MNA/Reuters

Manchester United make second bid for Rooney

LONDON, 29 Aug — Manchester United have made a second bid for England striker Wayne Rooney in excess of 23.5 million pounds (42.23 million US dollars), the teenager's club Everton said on Saturday.

Everton had already rejected three bids this week for the 18-year-old, one by Premier League rivals Manchester United for 20 million pounds and two by Newcastle United, the second of which was for 23.5 million pounds.

"Manchester United have made an offer for Wayne Rooney which is in excess of the second bid which was lodged by Newcastle United earlier this week," Everton's head of public relations Ian Ross told the club's web site.

Rooney, still sidelined after breaking a bone in his foot at the Euro 2004 tournament in Portugal, handed a transfer request to Everton manager David Moyes on Friday.

The transfer window closes on Tuesday.

Moyes, speaking after Everton beat West Bromwich Albion 2-1 at home on Saturday, said if it were down to him Rooney would not be transferred. "Ultimately all decisions are the football manager's...but I don't expect it, selling a player at that price or keeping a player...It'll be a club

decision not just the manager's decision," Moyes said.

Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, who believes his side would be as strong as the 1999 European Cup winners with the addition of Rooney, said: "We just have to keep working away..."

"It's down to Everton to decide whether the boy comes to us or goes elsewhere," he added, after his side's 1-1 draw at Blackburn Rovers. "I believe (the squad) will be just as strong as we had in 1999. Both squads have really good talent, although it is difficult to compare players," Ferguson was quoted as saying in British newspapers on Saturday.

"But what I will have again is four top strikers to choose from. It will give us strength and a lot of options," he said of Rooney, who scored four goals for Euro 2004 quarterfinalists England in June. Ferguson has three top strikers in his present squad, Dutchman Ruud van Nistelrooy, England's Alan Smith and Louis Saha of France. — MNA/Reuters



Uruguay's Daniel Pereira, left, of Penarol battles for the ball with Alvaro Pintos, right, of Central Espanol during the first division soccer match in Montevideo, Uruguay, on Saturday, 28 Aug, 2004. — INTERNET

PSV Eindhoven go top despite 2-2 draw at NAC Breda

AMSTERDAM, 29 Aug — PSV Eindhoven moved to the top of the Dutch First Division on Saturday, despite a 2-2 draw at NAC Breda.

AZ Alkmaar clinched their first win, 2-1 at NEC Nijmegen, while Heerenveen went down 4-1 at Twente Enschede. PSV head the table with seven points from three matches, one above Feyenoord, who travel to fourth-placed Vitesse Arnhem on Sunday, and Ajax Amsterdam, who host Utrecht.

Three days after their impressive 7-3 aggregate win over Red Star Belgrade to reach the Champions League, PSV had the perfect start when skipper Mark van Bommel opened the scoring after just 56 seconds.

NAC fought back, however, and levelled through Arne Slot's header two minutes before the break. Five minutes into the second half, the home side took the lead again through Mike Zonneveld only for Gerald Sibon to equalize 11 minutes later.

Alkmaar had started the season with just a point from two matches but comfortably

beat fifth-placed NEC Nijmegen. Dutch international Denny Landzaat netted after 14 minutes and Kenneth Perez doubled the lead with 13 minutes remaining.

Romano Denneboom, new to the Dutch national squad, scored a consolation for the hosts in injury time.

Twente Enschede were 3-1 ahead at halftime against Heerenveen through Blaise N'Kufo, Jason Culina and Ramon Zomer before Culina netted again in the second half to seal Twente's first win of the season.

Roda JC Kerkrade moved into sixth spot after coming from behind to beat Graafschap Doetinchem with second-half goals from Arouna Kone and Brazilian Cristiano.

On Friday, Willem II Tilburg beat Den Bosch 2-1, scoring their first goals of the season thanks to Danny Mathijssen and Kevin Bobson. — MNA/Reuters

Deportivo scramble draw with 10-man Espanyol

MADRID, 29 Aug — Title hopefuls Deportivo Coruna needed a late Walter Pandiani header to claim a 1-1 draw with 10-man Espanyol on the opening day of the Spanish league season on Saturday.

Deportivo, who finished third last term and also reached the semifinals of the Champions League, fell behind in the 23rd minute when Raul Tamudo tucked in a penalty after being brought down by goalkeeper Jose Molina.

Espanyol had midfielder Ivan de la Pena sent off with over half an hour to go but stuttering Deportivo hardly threatened a comeback until Pandiani swooped to convert a Pedro Munitis cross from the left with 12 minutes to go.

Javier Irureta's side pushed forward for the remainder of the game but they failed to create a single clear chance in what was a disappointing start to their campaign.

Atletico Madrid, who missed out on a return to Europe when they were beaten by Villarreal in the Intertoto Cup in midweek, were immediately into their stride in the league with a smart 2-0 win at home to Malaga on Saturday.

After a series of near-misses, Atletico took the lead when Ariel Ibagaza's shot came back off a post and rebounded in off Malaga keeper Juan Calatayud just before half-time. — MNA/Reuters

Argentina wins men's soccer in Olympics in 52 years

ATHENS, 29 Aug — Argentina defeated nine-man Paraguay 1-0 in the final of the men's soccer tournament on Saturday to take their first Olympic gold medal in 52 years.

Carlos Teves, from Boca Juniors, scored his eighth goal in the Olympics at the 18th minute for the win in the ill-tempered South American game.

Paraguay had Emilio Martinez sent off in the 66th minute for elbowing Andres D'Alessandro in the face and Diego Figueredo was dismissed for a second bookable offence seven minutes from time.

Argentina, runners-up to Nigeria in Atlanta eight years ago, had not won an Olympic gold in any sport since a rowing title at the 1952 Helsinki Games.

The Paraguay side did make a few counter attacks in the first half, but their forward were tightly marked once they drove the ball to the Argentine half, making their few shooting attempts uncomfortable.

The 1.68-metre tall Boca Junior Tevez, who seemed always ready to score, attracted quite a lot of attention from the Paraguayan side.

In the 59th minute, the Argentina had another excellent chance when Cesar Delgado muscled a header to the goal, and Luis Gonzalez dashed up to tap it in the right direction, but was confiscated by the goalie.

MNA/Xinhua

Arsenal extends unbeaten run with 4-1 win

LONDON, 29 Aug — Arsenal extended their record unbeaten run with a 4-1 win at Norwich City on Saturday.

Champions Arsenal are top of the table and unbeaten in a record 44 league games, while Chelsea's fourth win from four was their best start to a top-flight season and left them second only on goal difference.

United scraped their draw at Ewood Park to lie 12th, but the club took another step towards signing Everton's teenage England striker Wayne Rooney after bettering a 23.5-million-

pound (42.23-million-US-dollar) offer from Newcastle. Tottenham Hotspur moved up to third on eight points after beating Birmingham City 1-0 with a Jermain Defoe strike, Manchester City got their first win by crushing Charlton Athletic 4-0 and Newcastle United lost 4-2 at Aston Villa.

Arsenal were good value for their win at Carrow Road after a flying start against the

Premier League newcomers.

Goals from Spaniard Jose Antonio Reyes and France's Thierry Henry and Robert Pires put Arsenal a 3-0 up at halftime, though they were lucky not to have defender Lauren dismissed after he bundled striker Darren Huckerby to the floor on the break.

Norwich replied in the 50th minute, when Huckerby converted a penalty after being tripped by defender Justin Hoyte, but Arsenal were largely in cruise control and completed the scoring through substitute Dennis Bergkamp in stoppage time.

"It's always difficult to keep the same focus when you're 3-0 up," Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger told Sky Sports News.

"They got back into it with the penalty and from then on, we kept the ball well but they had a few chances."

MNA/Reuters



Arsenal's Jose Antonio Reyes celebrates his goal against Norwich at Norwich on 28 Aug, 2004. — INTERNET

Answers for yesterday's crossword puzzle

H	A	N	S	O	M	K	P	R	I	N	T	S
A	J	O	P	M	U	L	N	C	G	H	I	
M	I	M	I	S	S	T	A	T	E	D	C	
L	E	A	N	H	K	W	C	O	D	I	R	K
E	T	T	R	D	E	V	I	L	O	R	E	L
T	H	R	E	A	T	C	D	I	M	I	T	Y
N	T	I	R	R	Y	K	K	N	I	G	H	C
J	A	M	M	E	D	B	F	E	T	I	S	H
U	I	O	R	S	A	L	A	D	O	B	A	E
N	I	N	E	R	A	T	T	F	L	E	A	
K	Y	O	R	K	S	H	I	R	E	M	R	
E	L	O	N	E	O	R	O	A	S	T		
T	O	C	S	I	N	M	E	M	O	R	Y	

Girondins Bordeaux claim 2-0 win over Sochaux

PARIS, 29 Aug — Goals by Cyril Rool and Lilian Laslandes earned Girondins Bordeaux a deserved 2-0 victory over Sochaux in the early Ligue 1 game on Saturday.

The Aquitaine side provisionally move to third in the standings with seven points from four matches.

The hosts opened the scoring after 38 minutes when former RC Lens left back Rool blasted home a perfect Camel Meriem cross. — MNA/Reuters

Provisions donated to monasteries in Dagon, South Okkalapa

YANGON, 29 Aug— Families of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) and wellwishers donated rice, edible oil, salt, medicines and grams to 17 monasteries in South Okkalapa Township, Yangon East District, at a ceremony held at the Dhammayon of the Okkalapa Pagoda in the township this afternoon, attended by Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

The ceremony was graced by the presence of member of the panel of patrons of Ngwe Kya Yan Pariyatti Monastery in the township Sayadaw Dhammacariya Digha Bhandaka Bhaddanta Dhamma Dinna and

members of the Sangha from the monasteries.

Also present on the occasion were Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, senior military and civilian officers, local authorities, officials, members of social and religious associations and wellwishers.

The Sayadaw of Ngwe Kya Yan Monastery invested the congregation with the Five Precepts.

The Secretary-2 presented offertories to the Sayadaw. The commander,



State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein accepts cash donation for monasteries in Dagon Township from a wellwisher — MNA

the minister, the deputy minister and military

officers offered alms to members of the Sangha. Next, Vice-Adjutant-General Brig-Gen Hla Shwe, Commodore Maw Thein of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) and Lt-Col Nay Win of the Office of the

Commander-in-Chief (Air) also offered rice, edible oil and grams donated by families of Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) to the Sayadaws.

The commander presented rice donated by Yangon Division PDC,

the deputy minister, rice donated by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Chairman of Yangon East District PDC Lt-Col Maung Maung Sein and officials, rice by Yangon (See page 9)



Efficient use of power inspected at offices in downtown Yangon

YANGON, 29 Aug — Chairman of Power and Fuel Utilization Supervisory Committee Member of the State Peace and Development Council Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win, accompanied by Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Vice-Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa and officials, inspected efficient use of power and fuel at filling stations in Ahlon Township, Ahlon Power Station, the City Hall, Maha Bandoola Park, the Ministers' Office, General Post Office Myanma Airways, Customs Department, Six-Storey Building, Ministry of Commerce and Bogyoke Market at 8 pm yesterday.

On his inspection tour, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win instructed officials to use just adequate light at the offices at night, turn on the light at the office in-charge and places for security measures, not to switch on security light and switch off power after the daybreak.

Next, Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspected supply and sufficient use of power in the townships in Yangon City.— MNA

Efficient use of electricity

- * Use daylight as the main source of light
- * Use the least possible amount of electricity only if there is not enough natural light
- * Use the least possible amount of electricity required in production and service enterprises
- * Preventing waste of electricity benefits the user and others

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp everyday by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-mega-watt power station can supply.

State Peace and Development Council member Lt-Gen Kyaw Win inspects efficient use of electricity at the Office of Ministers. MNA

Philippines, Thailand to discuss developing alternative fuel

MANILA, 29 Aug — Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said on Saturday that she would discuss with Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra jointly developing an alternative fuel during a meeting next week in Beijing.

Both Arroyo and Shinawatra will attend the Third International Conference of Asian Political Parties scheduled from September 3 to 4 in the Chinese capital.

"Thailand's Prime Minister Dr. Thaksin Shinawatra and I will talk about investment in ethanol," said Arroyo during a tour of an oil depot in Manila as the country is in the midst of an oil crisis caused by soaring oil prices.

Ethanol, also known as ethyl alcohol, is a colourless, high-performing and environment friendly motor fuel made by fermenting and distilling starch and sugar crop like maize, sorghum, potato, wheat, sugarcane, corns as well as fruit and vegetable waste.

Arroyo cited Brazil for its successful production and use of ethanol, while expressing optimism that the

Philippines will also be using petrol blended with at least 5 per cent of this natural additive.

The Philippine Government is promoting exploration and use of ethanol and other alternative fuel to lessen the country's reliance on imported oil. The Philippine Department of Energy admitted on Friday that the country is in the midst of an oil crisis and ordered government offices to reduce electricity and fuel consumption. The world oil price hit 38.54 US dollars per barrel this month, as was compared with 31.52 US dollars in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in October 1990.

Arroyo Friday also ordered all members of her Cabinet to trim down their respective security convoys in line with the government's energy conservation and austerity programme.

She also praised the drivers of Jeepneys, the jeep-like small buses which are an important means of mass transportation in Philippine cities and towns, for keeping the fare rates unchanged despite soaring fuel prices.

MNA/Xinhua

Efficient use of fuel

- * Saving one gallon of fuel per car per month will save the nation one US dollar
- * Thus, a total of 455,822 cars in Myanmar can save US\$ 5.5 million in a year
- * The amount, US \$ 5.5 million, can build a major bridge across Ayeyawady River