State making relentless efforts for fulfilling socio-economy of all national people residing in Union and strengthening national reconsolidation

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye attends opening of Laynya-Mandaing Bridge

YANGON, 23 OCT—The opening of Laynya-Mandaing Bridge in Pyigy Mandaing in Bokpyin Township, Taninthayi Division, was held this morning, attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary-1 of the SPDC Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the SPDC Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Quartermaster General Lt-Gen Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Taninthayi Division PDC Chairman Coastal Region Command Commander Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, ministers, deputy ministers, senior military officers, officials from the SPDC Office, departmental heads, divisional officials, district and township level officials, township PDC chairmen and departmental officials, Chief Engineer U Hla Min and engineers, staff, local people, teachers and students, USDA members, social organization members and others.

Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein made an address on the occasion. He said the newly-opened 860-feet long bridge built on Laynya River is of reinforced concrete type. Despite efforts to improve the southernmost part of the country, Taninthayi Division, this coastal region which relies on air and water transport is a coastal region which relies on air and water transport. Although there are good foundations for enterprises such as fishery, agriculture and mining, the development of the region is slow because of difficulties in security and transportation.

To be able to overcome this situation, in accordance with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe, officials went down to the grassroots level and attended to the needs. The party led by Vice-Senior General Maung Aye himself had arrived to inspect the development tasks and to attend the opening ceremony of the bridge.

The projects being implemented by the State in the division include building of the strategic Dawei-Myeik-Taninthayi-Bokpyin-Kawthoung Union Highway and river- and creek-crossing bridges. The 154-mile long Dawei-Myeik road section and the 55-mile long Myeik-Taninthayi road section became tarred ones and cars have regularly been plying on them. Altogether 14 miles of the remaining Taninthayi-Bokpyin road section has been tarred and over 70 miles of the road has been upgraded into a gravel one. Similarly, a total of 34 miles of the 142-mile long Bokpyin-Kawthoung road has been tarred and over 100 miles of the road has been upgraded into a gravel one. Although the Kawthoung-Bokpyin-Taninthayi road that was serviceable only in the open season in the past still needs to be upgraded in order that, it can be used in all seasons.

In constructing the Dawei-Myeik-Taninthayi-Bokpyin-Kawthoung Union Highway, all necessary river- and creek-crossing bridges along the highway have completely been constructed. Altogether six bridges which are over 500 feet and above in length — the Winwa Bridge, the Palauk Bridge, the Palauk Bridge, the Palauk Bridge, the Palauk Bridge, and the Pathoung Bridge and the

(See page 8)
Lt-Gen Ye Myint pays reverence to remains of Sayadaw Bhaddanta Nandobhasa in PyinOoLwin

YANGON, 23 Oct — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Myint Maung and officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs, left Kyaukse for Nyaungpin Aing Tawya Monastery in PyinOoLwin, Mandalay Division, yesterday morning. They paid homage to the remains of Presiding Sayadaw of Nyaungpin Aing Tawya Monastery in PyinOoLwin and Nyaungpin Aing Tawya Monastery in Salay's Aing Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaya Bhaddanta Nandobhasa. The Sayadaw, aged 82, was passed away at 4.35 am on 20 October.

Commander of the Peace and Development Council Office, Lt-Gen Min Aung Hlaing reported on arrangements being made for holding the final rites of the Sayadaw after forming the panel of patrons, the leading committee and subcommittees, and schedules for fixing day and time for holding the final rites.

Lt-Gen Ye Myint fulfilled the requirements.

YANGON, 23 Oct — The 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions, which are being held to perpetuate the national character and traditional culture and keep them alive here, have continued to the tenth day at designated places.

The competitions were watched by Chairman of the Leading Committee for the Competitions, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council, Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chairman of the Leading Committee for the Competitions, Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Brig-Gen Than Tun of the Ministry of Defence, Deputy Commander Col Wai Lwin, Director-General of the State Peace and Development Council Office Lt-Col Pe Nyein, departmental heads, members of work committees and subcommittees, enthusiasts, and visiting tourists.

The song contest was held at the National Museum on Pyay Road at 9 am.

Chairperson of the panel of judges Daw Tin Tin Mya, secretary Daw Maye Phyu Khine and members made assessment of the contests. In the religious song contest at higher education level (men), 13 contestants from states and divisions took part with the song “Aung-si-baw-than”.

Altogether 15 contestants took part in the girls’ modern classical song contest at basic education level (male) with the song “Phyu-phyuhsin-khin-khin-kyai-ktaik”. The programmes for the song contest will continue tomorrow.

The music contest took place at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyawng Street in Dagon Township this morning.

Among the members of the panel of judges were Sandaya U Chit Swe and members.

Altogether five contestants took part in the piano contest at professional level (male) with the song “Taung-zam-byun-pine (Yodaya)” and two contestants at professional level (female) with the song “Suwe-nyi-la-yin-myanthin-khin”.

Altogether 14 girls competed in the girls’ piano contest at basic education level (aged 10-15) with the song “Kye-se-ta-man”.

The harp contest took place at the Boys’ Basic Education Level Theatre. Four contestants took part in the competition at higher education level (male), and seven at higher education level (female) with the same song.

Four contestants took part in boys’ harp contest at basic education level (aged 15-20) and seven in girls’ harp contest at basic education level (aged 10-15).

The song-composition contest at basic education level (aged 15-20) was held at the Kambawza Theatre of the Fine Arts Department. Seven contestants took part.

YANGON, 23 Oct — The Maha Janaka marionette contest of the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions continued for the third day at National Theatre on Myoma Kyaung Street in Dagon Township this evening.

Among the audience were member of panel of patrons of the committee for holding the competitions Chairman of the leading committee Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, member of panel of patrons of the committee for holding the competitions Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Chairman of the work committee Commander of No 3 Military Region Col Tint Hsan, Commander of No 4 Military Region Col Yan Naing Oo, officials of the work committee and sub-committees and artists.

Tawwin marionette troupe of Yangon Division took part in the contest with the accompaniment of Pantra Sein Hla Myaing Saing troupe today.

Ponn Maung marionette troupe of Mon State will participate in the contest which will continue at the same venue tomorrow.

Ma Lein of Chin State competes at the Girls Basic Education Level Modern-classic Song Contest (Aged 15-20) at 11th MTCPAC.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe enjoys the performance of Yangon Division marionette troupe at the Maha Janaka Drama Contest.

Programmes of performing arts competitions continue
US soldiers fire in air to disperse Baghdad protest

BAGHDAD, 23 Oct—US soldiers fired above the heads of thousands of Iraqi government workers protesting on Tuesday after hearing that the Americans had detained a woman for refusing to be searched using a sniffer dog.

A Reuters correspondent said US troops had handcuffed a woman employee and forced her to stand in the line of protesters on stretchers in an attack on a three-vehicle convoy, but there was no comment from US officials.

The demonstration erupted in Indonesia's capital Jakarta on Tuesday after hearing that the Americans had detained a woman for refusing to be searched using a sniffer dog.

The state will exert greater efforts to deepen rural tax reform and reduce the financial burden on farmers substantially.

A Chinese farmer invents new type of sowing machine

HARBIN, 23 Oct — A Chinese farmer in China's northernmost Heilongjiang Province has invented a new type of "injection" sowing machine, which was recently awarded a state patent certificate.

Gao Qingjun, 58, developed the machine by himself from his decades of experience of farming. The machine is designed like an "injection needle for medical use", and can "infect" seeds directly into the water-saturated layer deep under the surface soil, according to Gao, from Xinghua Town, Qinggang County in Heilongjiang.

In this way, it is different from conventional sowing machines which had to first break up the earth, then drop seeds and finally cover the seeds with soil again.

CPC demands improvements to China's rural reform

BEIJING, 23 Oct—Further improvements to the ongoing reform in China's rural area were demanded in a decision issued Tuesday by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC).

As the core of the fundamental system for management in the countryside, the household-based land contract system should be kept stable and the rights of farmers on land management should be safeguarded, according to the decision.

Within the term of the contract, rural households have the right to sell their farmland management rights in accordance with law and at their own will. The regulations on the right to sell their farmland management rights in accordance with law and at their own will. The regulations on the right to sell their farmland management rights in accordance with law and at their own will. The regulations on the right to sell their farmland management rights in accordance with law and at their own will.

The most strict system of protecting cultivated land must be adopted to ensure national grain security. Under the principles of protecting farmers' rights and interests, investments in agriculture should be increased by the financial departments at all levels and the newly-added expenditure on education, sanitation and culture should be mainly used in rural areas.

The state will exert greater efforts to deepen rural tax reform and reduce the financial burden on farmers substantially. Policies related to tax reform will be improved in nationwide experimental units.

Protests against Bush's visit erupt in Indonesia

The demonstrations burned down the pictures of Bush and the US flags, according to Detik online here Tuesday. The protest sparked in Jakarta, the special autonomy province of Yogyakarta, Bali Province, Jember in East Java Province and Solo and Semarang in Central Java province.

In Jakarta, over 100 members of the Indonesian Muslim Student Action Union (KAMMI) burned down Bush picture and expressed their rejection over his visit. They also asked Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri to reject the visit. "Bush Is Lie, Reject Bush, Bush Terrorist Number One. Mega has to Reject Bush," said a banner.

In Yogyakarta, students took a long march, rejecting the US President's visit. "Say No to Bush, Bush Do Not Disturb My Country," a banner said.

In Denpasar, the capital of Bali Province, dozens of students from some universities and members of political parties, expressed their disagreement over Bush's arrival. They staged a rally in front of the US consulate general office in Renon in the province.

In Jember and Solo, protesters burned down the US flags and called Bush a terrorist.

Pipelines in northern Iraq still on fire

BAGHDAD, 23 Oct—A pipeline fire in northern Iraq was still ablaze on Tuesday, a day after a sabotage attack on pipelines that feed a Baghdad refinery and power station.

Iraqi Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Moezah Rashid, who works for a force protecting key installations, told reporters there had been an explosion on Monday after- noon a few miles south of the Baiji oil refinery, about 120 miles north of Baghdad. “What happened was sabotage,” he said. “There is a group of pipes, four of them, all pipeline in one direction. They (saboteurs) blew up only one and the other three caught fire from the first one.” Rashid said eight of the pipelines takes gas to Baghdad’s Daura refinery, while the two oil pipelines feed one of the capital’s power plants. The fourth pipeline carries liquefied petroleum gas.

Iraqi celebrate next to a burning US Army vehicle in the western end of Fallujah, outside Baghdad, on 22 Oct. 2003. Witnesses said four Americans were carried away on stretchers in an attack on a three-vehicle convoy, but there was no comment from US officials.
General says Iraq attacks on US troops up

FALLUJAH, 23 Oct— Iraqi gunmen have stepped up attacks on US troops in recent weeks, the commander of American forces said Wednesday, as ambush bombers struck again in this tense Sunni Muslim area west of Baghdad, in the northern city of Mosul and in the heart of the capital.

The US commander, Lt Gen Ricardo Sanchez, said some of the attacks may be carried out by people with links to al-Qaeda, but he added “we don’t have any confirmed al-Qaeda operatives in custody at this point.”

Elsewhere, US troops of the 4th Infantry Division arrested more than a dozen suspects, including a former major general of the Iraqi military, Wednesday north of Baghdad.

The Baghdad bombing, which occurred as a convoy passed through a tunnel in the center of the capital, slightly injured two US soldiers, who were returned to duty after treatment.

In Fallujah, witnesses said four Americans were carried away on stretchers after a roadside bomb exploded beside a three-vehicle convoy. The US military in Baghdad had no report on the incident.

After the attack, residents cheered and swarmed over one disabled vehicle, looting its contents and setting it afire.

It was the third attack against American troops in the Fallujah area in as many days.

Elsewhere, one soldier from the 101st Airborne Division was slightly injured when a bomb exploded in front of his convoy in Mosul. 225 miles north of Baghdad, the military said.

Sanchez, the American commander, acknowledged that attacks against his troops have increased in the last three weeks, especially in Anbar province which includes Fallujah.

“People have not been divided by what’s happened in Baghdad, but it’s more difficult to infiltrate,” Sanchez said. “We’ve had an average number of engagements from 20 to 25 (daily). We’ve seen a spike up to 35 in last three days.”

Sanchez said he believed operates of the extremist Ansal al-Islam, a group linked to al-Qaeda, as well as members of Osama bin Laden’s organization are operating inside Iraq.

France, Germany won’t give more money for Iraq

MADRID, 23 Oct—France and Germany said Wednesday they won’t give any more money toward Iraq even as American officials exhorted countries to open their pocketbooks, trying to parlay a hard-won UN resolution into billions of dollars in aid pledges.

The United States is trying to drum up $36 billion in donations from more than 70 countries gathering Thursday and Friday in Madrid, but that means winning over nations that thought the Iraq war was a bad idea to begin with. “We don’t foresee any additional aid at this stage — either in terms of financial aid or in cooperation in the military domain,” French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said.

Germany’s development minister cited his country’s own budget woes and said it simply cannot afford to give more than the $224 million it is already contributing.

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul also said she was against forgiving Iraq’s debt, saying such money toward Iraq even as American officials exhorted countries to open their pocketbooks, trying to parlay a hard-won UN resolution into billions of dollars in aid pledges.

She underlined Germany’s position by staying away from the Madrid conference herself and sending a deputy.

US officials downplayed the continuing violence in Iraq and focused on securing economic aid. “What’s important at the moment is that the economy be jump-started, because it’s flat on its back,” “John Negroponte, US ambassador to the United Nations, said in a TV interview.

He praised countries that have already promised money. Japan has pledged $1.5 billion for 2004; South Korea has agreed to $200 million, and Canada, $150 million. The World Bank has said it will lend Iraq up to $3.5 billion over the coming five years.

Brazil hails launching of Sino-Brazilian satellite

BRASILIA, 23 Oct— Brazilian Science and Technology Minister Roberto Amaral on Tuesday hailed the successful launching of the second Sino-Brazilian communications satellite as a step toward hope for expanding scientific research cooperation with China.

“Today is a historic day in the Brazil-China relations,” the minister told a Press conference Tuesday afternoon in the auditorium of the ministry, accompanied by Chinese Ambassador to Brazil, Jiang Yuande.

Amaral pointed out that the cooperation with China in space served as a model of South-South cooperation, which not only contributed to the progress in science and technology, but also benefited the economies of both countries.

The minister said Brazil was satisfied with the space cooperation with China and hoped to extend it to other areas of scientific research, such as the development of nuclear energy, new materials and animal vaccination, colored cotton production and agriculture.

The Chinese Ambassador said China and Brazil would soon start working on the third and fourth Earth resources satellites, featuring superior technology and image quality as compared with the two previous ones.

The third satellite was scheduled to be launched in 2006, said the ambassador.

The second Sino-Brazilian Earth resources satellite and another China-made small satellite carried by the Long March IV B carrier rocket were launched into different preset orbits at 0316 GMT Tuesday from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre.

The satellite was designed to monitor land resources changes, survey arable lands, pastures and grasslands, discover natural and human disasters, offer information on agriculture and environment, and explore mineral resources.

Philippines, Thailand ink pacts on agriculture, energy

MANILA, 23 Oct— The Philippines and Thailand signed on Tuesday two agreements aimed at boosting bilateral cooperation in agriculture and energy sectors, the Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

A Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Cooperation seeks to promote further collaboration in agricultural research and development through technology transfer, trade, training and scientific and technical cooperation between the two nations, the DFA said in a statement.

On the other hand, the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Oil and Gas Activities will establish an ASEAN Petroleum Hub in the Philippines as a joint business venture between the two governments.

The joint undertaking will provide energy security in both normal and emergency situations and stabilize the pricing of oil. It also aims to minimize importation of oil, thus reducing foreign currency requirements.

The two pacts were signed during the 11th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Bangkok, Thailand.

Guangdong’s foreign trade tops $200b in first quarter

GUANGZHOU, 23 Oct— Guangdong Province, an economic powerhouse in south China, registered a foreign trade volume of 200.93 billion US dollars in the first three quarters this year, a year-on-year increase of 25.8 per cent, Customs statistics show.

The province’s foreign trade volume accounted for 33.1 per cent of the national total for the first nine months.

Guangdong’s exports for September alone grew 25.7 per cent year-on-year to hit 15.05 billion US dollars, according to statistics.

Guangdong exported electromechanical products worth 68.52 billion US dollars and high-tech products worth 32.07 billion US dollars, respectively, in the January-September period, up 33 per cent and 49.7 per cent respectively over the corresponding period of last year.

An Iraqi woman cries as she looks at her relative being detained by soldiers of US Army 4th Infantry Division during a weapons-search operation in the village of Hamra, about 10 miles northeast of Tikrit, Iraq, on 22 October, 2003.—INTERNET

Soldiers of US Army 4th Infantry Division guard suspects with hands tied behind their backs during a weapons search operation in the village of Hamra, about 20km (12 miles) northeast of Tikrit, Iraq, on 22 October, 2003. US soldiers detained several suspects believed to be involved in deadly attacks on American troops and uncovered a weapons cache buried in the farming community during raids early Wednesday near Saddam Hussein’s hometown.—INTERNET

Protesters greet Bush with placards outside Australian Parliament

WASHINGTON, 23 Oct—Hundreds of protesters gathered outside Australia’s Parliament as US President George W Bush arrived to give a speech, holding up posters condemning the US leader for his war on Iraq.

Slogans such as “Bush is an evil guy” and “Lying war heads” were daubed on posters as police stood by.

The crowd applauded as protesters carried an effigy of Bush followed closely by a dog wearing a mask of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, who strongly supported the war.

Some MPs have threatened to turn their backs on Bush during his speech. Some 41 from the Labor opposition plan to give him a letter of protest, although opposition leader Simon Crean has told his party to be respectful to Bush.

MNA/Xinhua
Iraqis get travel documents for first time since war

Baghdad, 23 Oct — Hundreds of Iraqis queued up on Tuesday for a new travel document which Iraq's US administration hopes will help sort out a tangle that keeps many people trapped inside Iraq's borders.

No passports have been issued since the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein on April 9.

The new document, carrying the authority of the US-administration, is described as an "Interim Travel Document" valid for six months allowing Iraqis to travel — assuming they can get a visa to the country they wish to visit.

"We are issuing from 800 to 1,000 documents per day only in Baghdad as a first stage," said Lieutenant Colonel Abdulsalam Jassim, head of the newly formed Passport Department, as more than 600 people queued outside his office.

Iraqis who already hold passports must get them validated, a potentially difficult hurdle in a country where storage of personal data is in chaos.

Those with validated passports do not need the new document.

All passports bearing a date after April 9, 2003 have been declared invalid because of forgery fears.

Jassim said the passport department's data base of CD's and floppy disks were "lost" during the war and efforts to retrieve them had failed, making validation of passports difficult or impossible.

"Passport officials under the old regime refused to give them (databases) to us unless we gave them their jobs back," Jassim told Reuters. "We could not give passports to people who were security officials banned from holding jobs."  

Clutching her new travel document, Munaf Farid, 30, said she would not try to go abroad without a visa.

"I am going to make sure I have visas from embassies of countries I want to visit before I leave," she said. "I don't want to risk going to the border and then having to come back."

Hassan Ali, 42, a motor spares parts merchant, said he had heard from travellers who had already managed to go abroad that gaining entry to countries such as neighbouring Jordan, the favourite exit point for Iraqis, could be a hit and miss affair.

"Sometimes they let you in. Sometimes they don't."  

MNA/Reuters

Russia not ready for donation to Iraq rebuilding

Moscow, 23 Oct — Russia is not planning any assistance to Iraq at this stage, but Russian companies are ready to invest in Iraq, Deputy Foreign Minister Yuri Fedotov said on Tuesday.

"We see no conditions at the moment for Russia's involvement in the rebuilding of Iraq as a donor," said Fedotov, who will head a Russian delegation to the Madrid Conference on the Reconstruction of Iraq, scheduled for October 23-24.

Many Russian companies are ready now to invest in the Iraqi economy and implement their projects in the country at their own expense," he noted, adding that the investments would total "several billion US dollars.

"Such investment projects can prove quite useful and should be regarded as Russia's significant contributions to the restoration of Iraq."

Fedotov was quoted by the Interfax news agency. At the Madrid conference, the Russian delegation would push for fulfilling the contracts signed by Russian companies under the United Nations' Oil for Food Programme, Fedotov said.

About 75 per cent of the contracts have already won preliminary approval, but other contracts, such as construction of power plants, roads, and purification facilities and extensions of gas pipelines, are also crucial to meeting the fundamental needs of the Iraqis, he said. Such contracts could be financed either by the existing Iraq Development Fund or a new Iraq rebuilding fund to be set up at the Madrid conference, Fedotov said.

Russia opposed the US-led war in Iraq, but has made efforts to patch relations with the United States, which have been cooled over Iraq, after major combat operations ended in Iraq.

Last week, Russia backed a new US-proposed UN resolution, which authorizes a multinational force in Iraq and paves the way for other countries to contribute troops and money to peace-keeping and reconstruction efforts in Iraq.  

MNA/Reuters

World Roads Congress opens in Durban

Johannesburg, 23 Oct— The ministers’ session at the World Roads Congress in the South African coastal city of Durban on Monday focused its attention on the importance of partnerships, good governance, and the harnessing of investment, to sustain roads and other economic development.

The 22nd Paris-based Independent Association of Road Congresses (PIARC) conference began on Sunday with the aim of adding the necessary boost to the drive for infrastructure development in the world. It is scheduled to end on October 25.

South Africa’s Minister of Transport Dullah Omar called for a holistic approach to economic growth, noting that this often involved looking at more than just the larger picture of things.

"Roads perform an economic function at national, provincial and local levels, with rural transport infrastructure an issue which is very close to civil society, therefore community-based organisations will play an important role," he explained.

In this regard, training and capacity building would become strategic ingredients to drive development at grassroots level.

Ministers from both developed and developing countries were invited to contribute comments on the three topics under discussion.

Steve Mahoney of Canada said transport caused disruption, environmental pollution and noise, and had to be properly managed.

All highways in Canada fell under the jurisdiction of provinces, while many airports and harbours were managed locally.

Road authorities in that country had created advisory boards to secure local input, while working closely with research agencies, mainly through industry and the university communities.

Rapid economic growth forecast for Venezuela in 2004

Caracas, 23 Oct— The Executive President of the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) Enrique Garcia Tuesday said that Venezuela can expect a rapid economic growth next year. Garcia made the point to the Press before presenting his paper, "The Importance of the Colombian-Venezuelan Integration in the Andean Region", on occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Venezuelan-Colombian Economic Integration Chamber.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) gave favourable forecasts, 7.7 per cent and 10 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) growth in Venezuela next year, said Garcia.

He said the expected growth was attributable to favourable economic circumstances in the country since last year.

MNA/Inklu

Venezuela seizes one ton of marijuana

Caracas, 23 Oct.—Venezuelan authorities seized one ton of marijuana in a vehicle near the border with Colombia, Venezuela’s police chief, Daival Zerpa, said Tuesday.

The drug was transported from the Colombian town of Cucuta and was confiscated in Venezuela’s border state Tachira, 600 kilometres south of Caracas. Zerpa told reporters. The marijuana was to be carried to Venezuela’s eastern city of Carupano, the Suyapa State, then be shipped to the Caribbean Islands, he said, citing the Criminal Investigation Bureau. Zerpa said several people involved in the case had already been identified.

The vehicle, carrying the drug, hidden in compartments, belonged to a private company and had been parked in a public parking lot for several days before being seized, said the police chief. — MNA/Inklu

Iraqi security guards arrest a man, centre, after accusing him of firing rounds out of his car at the Baghdad University, on 21 Oct, 2003. —Reuters

341 US troops killed since the beginning of military operations in Iraq

Washington, 23 Oct — As of Wednesday, 22 Octo-

ber, 341 US service members have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq, according to the Department of Defence.

The British military has reported 50 deaths; Denmark, one; and Ukraine, one. On or since May 1, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 203 US soldiers have died in Iraq, according to the latest Defence Department figures.

Since the start of military operations, 1,600 US service members have been injured as a result of hostile action, according to US Central Command. Non-hostile injured numbered 338. The latest identifications reported by the US Military: Army Pfc Paul J Bueche, 19; Daphne, Ala.; died Tuesday in Balad, Iraq when a helicopter fire he was changing exploded; assigned to the 131st Aviation Regiment, Army National Guard, Birmingham, Ala. — Internet
Iraq road side bomb hits US military vehicle

**FALLUJA (Iraq), 23 Oct** — A roadside bomb wrecked a US military vehicle in the flashpoint town of Falluja on Wednesday, witnesses said, adding that there had been American casualties.

The US military had no immediate word on the report. Reuters television footage showed a Humvee lying in a ditch off a main road outside a Sunni Muslim town. Local people were throwing petrol onto the blazing vehicle and shouting “Allahu Akbar (God is great)”. Falluja, located west of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, has been the scene of many attacks by guerrillas who have killed 104 US troops in Iraq since President George W. Bush declared major combat over on May 1.

Witnesses said about 250 people staged a protest outside the mayor’s office in Falluja on Wednesday to demand the release of the town’s top cleric, Sheikh Jamal Shakir Nazzal, whom they said had been arrested by US troops, along with four of his students, about a week ago.

MNA/Reuters

French makes Iraq aid conditional on sovereignty

**PARIS, 23 Oct** — French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said on Wednesday France would not provide further aid to Iraq outside its EU commitments until the question of Iraqi sovereignty was resolved.

One day ahead of an Iraqi donors’ conference in Madrid, Villepin said France was committed to carry its share of the 200 million euros (235 million US dollars) pledged in aid to Iraq from European Union coffers for 2003-2004 but would not go further. In addition, it has promised bilateral humanitarian aid.

“At this stage, we don’t plan any additional aid, whether it be financial or through cooperation in the military sphere,” Villepin said at a news conference with his Danish counterpart Per Stig Moeller.

“To us, the starting point is truly the full and complete recognition of Iraqi sovereignty,” he said.

“We consider that we have to move towards this recognition of Iraqi sovereignty, which is the central condition if you really want to launch the reconstructions process in Iraq.”

Paris, a strong opponent of the Iraq war, will be represented by Trade Minister Francois Loos. — MNA/Reuters

Germany rules out cancelling Iraq debt

**BERLIN, 23 Oct** — Germany’s Minister for Cooperation and Development said on Tuesday that Germany is opposed to the cancellation of Iraq’s huge debt burden.

Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul said that, given Iraq’s oil riches, it would be better to have credit financing ahead of the huge oil revenues that will bring to the country.

Iraq’s debt is estimated at 110 billion euros (128 billion US dollars). The minister called for a new UN resolution that will share out responsibility for reconstruction.

MNA/Xinhua

Foreign direct investment rises in Vietnam

**HANOI, 23 Oct** — Vietnam is estimated to lure foreign investment capital of 2.06 billion US dollars in the first ten months of this year, up 13 per cent over the same period last year, the Ministry of Planning and Investment told Xinhua on Tuesday.

Of the total capital, 1.3 billion US dollars comes from 496 newly-licensed projects.

The rest is the additional capital of 289 operational projects, mainly poured into industrial and constructional projects.

Despite increase of capital, the number of new projects in the period is estimated to represent a year-on-year decrease of 13.1 per cent.

In the reviewed period, foreign-invested enterprises are expected to obtain total revenue of 10.2 billion US dollars, excluding crude oil turnover, year-on-year increase of 40 per cent.

Meanwhile, they are estimated to record export turnovers of 5.2 billion US dollars, increasing 45 per cent and accounting for more than 31 per cent of the country’s total export turnover.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Navy ships visit island of Guam

**APRA HARBOR (Guam), 23 Oct** — Two Chinese Navy ships began a four-day port call to Guam on Wednesday, the first visit to the American Pacific territory by sailors from the Communist country.

In a further sign of warming military ties between the two nations, Chinese officials will meet with US defense officials.

The Chinese vessels consist of the Luhua class guided-missile destroyer, and the Qinghuai, a coast guard cutter, according to the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency.

MNA/Xinhua

Drugs gang sentenced for 146 years in Britain

**LONDON, 22 Oct** — A 12-member drugs gang was sentenced Tuesday for a total of 146 years in jail by a court in Liverpool, a port city in western England.

The gang was sent to prison after what Customs officers described as the biggest single seizure of drugs, with an estimated street value of 20 million pounds, in May 2002, according to a BBC report.

The drugs, including 119 kilos of heroin, 99 kilos of amphetamine, 14 kilos of cannabis and one kilogram of cocaine, were discovered among vats carrying hazardous chemicals into Britain through the port of Dover.

However, the seizure is just a tip of the iceberg but this should serve as a severe warning, said Detective Superintendent David Brown, head of the Serious and Organized Crime Unit.

“I feel that 146 years reflects the severity of the offenders’ actions and their intentions to distribute Class A drugs throughout the country,” he was quoted as saying at the court.

“Why do you think that the drugs were destined for other organized criminal groups within the Northwest,” he added.

MNA/Xinhua

Iraqis celebrate as a US Army Humvee burns after it was destroyed by an improvised explosive device on Wednesday. — XINHUA

COMESA to set up common investment area

**NAIROBI, 23 Oct** — The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) is to set up The COMESA Common Investment Area (CCIA) that will attract foreign investors and boost trade within the region.

COMESA is carrying out country consultations on the CCIA to different member states,” Trevor Simmumba, managing director of Africa Trade Advancement, a consultant firm in Zambia, was quoted by Rwanda News Agency as saying on Wednesday.

Simmumba said they had already travelled to 16 countries and the scheme they are proposing to Rwanda will benefit the country and other COMESA member states in a long term.

Williams Nkurunziza, director general of the Rwanda Investment Promotion Agency, said, “The CCIA proposal is an excellent suggestion for our country as the world is becoming a one-market place.”

However, Nkurunziza said the proposal was subject to difficulties since COMESA member countries have different economies and policies that govern them.

MNA/Xinhua
Myanmar’s junta escapes US tongue-lashing at Apec

BANGKOK—Myanmar’s ruling junta escaped an expected backlash from the United States at the Asia Pacific summit here, getting away without even a mention in the two-day discussions which wrapped up Tuesday.

US President George W Bush did not manage to get the topic squeezed onto the agenda of talks among Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) leaders; according to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

“We did not discuss Myanmar at all,” Mahathir told reporters at the conclusion of the summit. The leaders instead exclusively focused on trade and security issues, with the region’s economic recovery more directly, Thai foreign affairs ministry spokesman Phahungkhetkool told AFP.

“This is an economic cooperation forum and we discuss security issues in a different forum to have the stability of the region. As far as security issues are concerned, the main focus was terrorism and issues like the situation on the Korea peninsula, he said.

Myanmar, a junta, released a statement defending itself before the summit concluded.

The duty defined by the national cause

(Continued from yesterday)

The Tatmadaw Government had to remove all the strike camps that were disturbing and threatening the rule of law and community peace after the attacks on the police stations; take action against the lawless acts and unrest according to the existing laws. At the same time the Tatmadaw Government enacted the law to form the Multi-party Democracy Commission, and the law permitting the registration of the political parties. In this way the Government made plans to hold the multi-party democracy election generally. It abolished the laws prohibiting the internal and external trade activities of the previous governments. It enacted the Union of Myanmar Investment Law with Law No 1098. The law has protected foreign investment and helped develop the market-oriented economy.

Geographically, Myanmar has a large number of creeks and rivers flowing with strong current, and high mountain ranges that are posing as natural barriers for transport between one place and another, thereby weakening the relations among the national races living in the Union of Myanmar. As the national races were not able to build total trust, understanding and sympathy among themselves, there occurred suspicions in the Union. There were armed conflicts and disagreements between the national races due to the perpetuation of the colonialists to drive a wedge among them. Till now there still exists the armed opposition of some ethnic races who have been instigated by the colonialists. Because of the instability, the remote border areas where the ethnic races live had left behind in development in all sectors.

Thus, the Tatmadaw Government’s leadership role in discharging the duty delineated by the national cause is very important for promoting the national and regional developments, to consolidate the national unity. They are now taking part in the national and regional development undertakings together with the Government, the Tatmadaw and the national races.

Head of State Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance at the 50th Anniversary of the Armed Forces Day, saying, “I would like to explain the role of the Tatmadaw. The Tatmadaw at present is not acting haphazardly without having any firm belief and conviction. Comrades, you will have to understand that the Tatmadaw is not doing its job with unclear visions or aimlessly.” The guidance explained the Tatmadaw Government’s endeavours to build the nation stage by stage.

Similarly, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt explained the future policy and programme of the nation on 30 August 2003. In his address, the Prime Minister said, “Political reforms were carried out step by step for the transformation to a genuine multi-party democracy system. Our endeavour is to achieve the best possible future after studying the weaknesses and weight of the democracy system that had been practiced in the past as well as to treat the historical wounds that have not been healed yet.”

Now the nation is achieving unprecedented development in all sectors including border areas and all towns and wards of the Union. These are the undeniable objective conditions of the national cause.

Here, I would like to boldly say that the unprecedented development in all sectors are the results of the Tatmadaw Government’s leadership role in discharging the duty delineated by the national cause with the energetic forces of the entire nation.

(Translation: TMT)


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

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

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

All this needs to be known

* Do not be frightened whenever intimidated
* Do not be bolstered whenever flattered
* Do not be softened whenever appealed

Dipavali Day reception held

Yangon, 23 Oct — The observance of Dipavali Day in conjunction with the New Year reception was held by the Myanmar-Indian Merchants Club at the Sedona Hotel here yesterday evening.

Deputy Minister of Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin, Indian Ambassador Rajiv Kumar Bhatia and officials lit candles on the occasion. U Kyi Min of the club, Director-General of the Religious Affairs Department Dr Myo Myint and the Indian Ambassador extended greetings respectively.

Secretary of the club U Maung Maung spoke words of thanks and hosted a dinner.

MNA

Rail Transportation Deputy Minister and Indian Ambassador lit a oil lamp to mark a new year and Dipavali Day.—mna

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Samantha Brown

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MNA

Samantha Brown
State making...

Laynya-Mandaing Bridge — have been constructed, leaving the minor ones out.

Of the six bridges, a unit of the Ministry of Military Engineers lent a helping hand in constructing the 810-feet long Laynya-Mandaing Bridge. The Kyaw Kyunkhi Bridge near Myeik will be opened soon.

In constructing the Union Highway which is important to develop the division, there are some limits such as labour and time as it is a region of much rain. In addition, transportation of necessary machinery to the construction site is difficult. The engineers, staff, and local people have witnessed and experienced the difficulties and hardships to be overcome in constructing the bridge. Division, district and township level officials, Tatmadawmen and local people had to cooperate with the farmers from the public.

So, it is to be recorded that the Union Highway, which is the life-blood of the State is the proof of the cooperative strength of the State, the farmers and the Tatmadaw, he elaborated.

In addition, the highway proved that whichever difficulties and limits can be overcome with the cooperation of the public, efficiency of the technicians and the supervision of the officials concerned at different levels, he added.

The State has been implementing the rural areas development tasks, the border areas development tasks and the 24 development regions for narrowing down the development gap and the equitable and harmonious development all over the country.

Priority has been given to tasks for road transportation as well as the tasks for economic, education and transportation as well as the tasks given to tasks for road transportation. As a result, the road network in the country is being developed all over the country. Priority has been given in constructing the 810-feet Laynya-Mandaing Bridge. The construction of the bridge started on 1-6-2001 and the construction completed in a period of two years and four months, spending K 1,075 million plus US$ 0.0325 million. The State spent K 2,723 million plus US$ 1.74 million for six bridges in the division.

There have been opened 162 major bridges each of which is over 180 feet and above including the Laynya-Mandaing Bridge. The construction of the bridge started on 1-6-2001 and the construction completed in a period of two years and four months, spending K 1,075 million plus US$ 0.0325 million. The State spent K 2,723 million plus US$ 1.74 million for six bridges in the division.

In participating the tasks for political or economic sectors, all are to rely on the internal strength. At a time when the State is under economic, financial and diplomatic pressures, the State, the people and the Tatmadaw are to unitefully build and maintain the new Union with diligence and perseverance. The bridges, roads and other infrastructures including the transport-building tasks, which are built with our sweat, blood, own investment and skills are to be valued and maintained in the interests of the southernmost part of the country.

In conclusion, on behalf of the State, he thanked all staff, engineers, Tatmadawmen and local people that took part in building the

Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein addresses the opening ceremony of Laynya-Mandaing bridge. MNA

Indian Ambassador calls on Minister for Information

Yaw Sein, 23/1844 - Information Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsuan received Indian Ambassador Mr Rajiv Kumar Bhata this afternoon at the ministry here.

In his call, he pointed out that the Union and strengthening the Union and the relationship between the Union and the relationship between the State and its neighbours, he said.

India is our neighbour and neighbour. The 860-foot long reinforced concrete bridge is 24 feet wide and can withstand 60 tons of load. It is a credit by three-foot-width pedestrian lanes. MNA

Union Highways...
Role of transportation...

(From page 16)

Project in Bagan, the number of international airports will increase to three to meet the growing demand.

With regard to maritime transport, we have successfully completed Thilawa, Thakayta, Alon and other industrial terminals including new container terminals equipped with modern equipment. In order to strengthen the transport sector, we have established for the first time in Myanmar, the Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University and the Myanmar Maritime University, where technicians and engineers will be trained to international standards. The development of human resources will contribute to orderly development of the aviation and maritime transport system in Myanmar.

As the infrastructure develops in the country, we believe that Myanmar could become a transportation hub for the region. Because of its strategic geographical location, Myanmar is a natural landbridge connecting Southeast Asia and South Asia as well as with China. Plans are already underway to link In- dia to Thailand through Myanmar. Similarly, a survey will soon be initiated with a view to establishing road connections between Myanmar and Bangladesh. There already exists various road transportation links between Myanmar and Thailand as well as with China. It is now possible to travel from China to Thailand through Myanmar in six hours. The growing network means that the dream of a East West Corridor connecting Mawlamyine in Myanmar with Danang in Vietnam is fast becoming a reality.

Now let us also add that Myanmar fully supports the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link project. In this regard, it is our hope that the spur line project to Myanmar will also receive due attention and support for such a development would link all the countries on the Singa- pore - Kunming rail route.

The Agenda of your Meeting is wide-ranging. You have challenging tasks before you but I am confident that ASEAN Transport Ministers and their Senior Officials will be able to have fruitful exchange of views and achieve progress towards the realisation of our goals.

I sincerely believe that the hard work, co-operation and understanding among the ASEAN countries will bring success.

Although your stay in Myanmar is short, I hope that you will have time to enjoy Myanmar’s unique beauty and rich culture. Allow me to conclude by wishing you every success in your deliberations and a most pleasant stay in our country.

It was attended by Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Myint Gyin Shwe, ministers, chief justice, attorney general, chairman of the Civil Service Selection and Training Board, Yangon mayor, the transport ministers and deputy ministers of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malay- sia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, senior transport officials of ASEAN, China and Japan, ASEAN Secretary-General, ambassadors, and guests.

After the opening ceremony, the prime minister, ASEAN transport ministers and deputy ministers, and ASEAN Secretary-General had a documentary photo taken. — MNA

Myanmar National...

(From page 16) and Divisions, and the MNWCWA is contributing towards the tasks. In an envis- oying to further cement national solidarity regardless of hilly region or plain region, she said they have come to be well aware of difficulties and problems of national race women and fulfilled their re- quirements. Being convinced that priority is to be given especially to the affairs of young women in towns, wards and villages, they hold discussions and talks on traf- fic issues among young women and on a wide scale wherever they make field tours.

Today, alien culture is penetrating into the nation, and so effective measures are therefore to be taken to guard against the possible dangers. She called on all parents, family members, teachers, and responsible persons to get young Myanmar women to observe Myanmar’s traditions, rules and regulations, culture and customs.

She urged those present to frankly and cordially present their difficulties and requirements at the group-wise discussions.

Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe presented exercise books and pencils, and Professor Daw May May Yee, cash assist- ance donated by MNCWA to the WCWAs of Taunggyi, Kalaw, Hopang, Nyanugshwe and Yawksaw townships respectively.

Afterwards, Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and members held focus group discussions with local women and gave advice and made suggestions to solve their difficulties and problems, attended to the needs.

The meeting was attended by members of township WCWAs, MNCWAs, the Union Solidarity and Develop- ment Associations and social organizations and local resi- dents totalling over 350.

After the meeting, DrDaw Khan Win Shwe and party cordially greeted those present and viewed documentary pho- tos of activities on women’s affairs.

— MNA

MNWCWA members carry out women’s affairs in Taunggyi...

YANGON, 23 Oct — Members of the Myanmar Women’s Affairs Committee for Women’s Affairs led by member of Myanmar Na- tional Committee for Women’s Affairs and the MNWCWA Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe left here by air on 21 October morning and ar- rived at Heho Airport in Shan State (South) at 7.45 am. At Panglong Yeiktha of Eastern Command in Taunggyi, Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe discussed women’s affairs with Shan State (South) WCWA members in Taunggyi. — MNA

Kanbawza Open 29 Oct

YANGON, 23 Oct — The Kanbawza Open Golf Championship will be held as the third leg of the Myanmar Golf Tour organized by Myanmar Golf Federation and Myanmar PGA at Ayethaya Golf Course in Taunggyi from 29 October to 1 Nov- ember.

Only amateur golfers who scored handicap (0-12) are allowed to play together with professional golfers in the third leg. Those aged un- der 18 are not allowed to take part in the championship.

The championship is of- ficially sponsored by Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar, KBZ Bank Ltd., Asia Mandalay, Grand Slam (Munsing Wear), Leo-Hin (Alpine), K & M Golf Centre, Maruman, Wilson, Canon, UP&G and Ellen Group Co Ltd. Sun Far Travels and Tours will present handsome prizes to golfers who scored hole-in-one in the championship.

Professional golfers and amateur golfers (men) who would like to participate in the third leg are to enlist at Ayethaya Golf Courses Taungyi. Ph: (081-24167) or (081-24356), not later than 4 pm on 27 October. The third leg is organized by Han Event Management. — MNA

Raw opium seized in Kentung Township...

YANGON, 23 Oct — A combined team comprising members of local intelli- gence unit, Kentung Special Anti-drug squad and Kentung Police Force, act- ing on a tip-off, on 10 Sep- tember searched a house in Kinzin Village, Kentung Township, and seized 8.5 grams of raw opium and ar- rested Baw Pi, a house owner. After follow-up investiga- tion, the authorities on 14 September also seized 2.3 kilos of raw opium and 0.0243 kilo of low grade opium hidden in the house of Mawlo (a) Arlo of Namphawt Village in Mawgmaing Township.

In connection with the case, actions are being taken against them under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law by Kentung Police Station. — MNA

Culprit Mawlo seen together with seized drug and related equipment. — MNA

Baw Pi seen together with raw opium packets. — MNA

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Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe discuss women’s affairs with Shan State (South) WCWA members in Taunggyi. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and representatives of ASEAN countries pose for a documentary photo after the opening ceremony of ATM. — MNA

Crew of a Thai government plane, which was forced to make an emergency landing at a military airbase in Thailand, is seen at the military airbase in Thung Song on October 22. — MNA

— MNA

— MNA
Linking the southern and eastern Shan State

Tin Maung Than

Shan State, with a surface area of more than 60,000 square miles, is the largest among all the states and divisions of the Union of Myanmar, and travelling from one place to another within the state was difficult in the past because of the poor condition of the roads, the few number of bridges, and the existence of the high mountain ranges and the fast-flowing rivers and streams in the region.

Shan State is also an interesting region where various ethnic races live preserving and upholding their own traditions and cultures, wearing their own traditional colourful costumes, and where a large number of gorges, rivers, bluish mountains, highland plains and waterfalls can be found.

The Government, since its assumption of the State duties, has made a firm determination to upgrade the transport sector, which serves as the main pillar of national economic development and strengthening the bonds of love and unity among the ethnic races living elsewhere in the Union.

Moreover, the Government’s sincere efforts to store national unity and peace and stability and to develop the Union have won the trust and understanding of the ethnic armed groups that have returned to the legal fold and are working together with the Government, the Tatmadaw, and the people for regional and national development.

Because of the prevalence of peace and stability and flourishing of national unity, the development undertakings covering the transport and other sectors can be carried out with greater momentum in the entire Union.

As in other states of Union, the Government has been endeavouring to develop the transport infrastructure in the whole Shan State including its northern, southern and eastern parts. And thanks to the endeavours, the national races can now travel conveniently and safely to any place in the state.

On 11 September, a major bridge linking southern and eastern Shan State was commissioned into service on Namhsan-Mognai-Tahsan Road in Langkho Bridge Township. The bridge near Dabseek village in the township is the 159th major bridge built by the Government to serve the interest of the local people.

The 300-foot concrete bridge, which is called Langkho Bridge, has a 24-foot wide motorway and the maximum load-bearing capacity of 60 tons. Its clearance is 78 feet wide and 6.5 feet high.

As Langkho Bridge links the southern and eastern Shan State, it helps develop the trade and transport between the two regions and enhance the amity and unity of the national races living in the Union.

YANGON, 23 Oct — The Ninth ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting hosted by Myanmar was held at the Sedona Hotel at 10.30 am today.

It was attended by Minister of Communications of Brunei Darussalam, Pehin Dato' Haji Zakaria Sulaiman, Director General Mr. Chinh Kong Hean of Public Works of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport of Cambodia, Minister Agum Gumelar of the Ministry of Communications of Indonesia, Minister Mr. Bosathong Vonglokham of the Ministry of Communications, Transport, Post and Construction of Laos, Minister Dato' C.K. Imam of the Ministry of Transport of Malaysia, Minister Ms. Prasit Supachai of the Ministry of Transport of Thailand, Deputy Minister Mr. Hla Myint Swe of the Ministry of Transport of Vietnam, ASEAN Secretariat General Mr. Ong Kong Yong, Deputy Director General Mr. Chinh Kong Hean of Cambodia vice-chairman.

The meeting was held on 2 September 2003 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Before the meeting, Chairmen of the 8th ASEAN Transport Ministers Meetings held in 2002 in Jakarta, Indonesia, Minister of Transport of Indonesia Mr. Agum Gumelar made a speech.

Next, the meeting elected Minister for Transport of the Union of Myanmar Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe chairman of the meeting and Director General Mr. Chinh Kong Hean of Cambodia vice-chairman. Afterwards, Chairman Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe made a speech. He said: we have set up a new highway network in the country and also opened up link to the rest of Asia. Thanks to cooperation among ASEAN countries in transport sector, ASEAN Trade Performance and Infrastructure Performance of 2002 showed signs of growth.

The Langkho Bridge.

As Langkho Bridge links the southern and eastern Shan State, it helps develop the trade and transport between the two regions and enhance the amity and unity of the national races living in the Union.

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As Langkho Bridge links the southern and eastern Shan State, it helps develop the trade and transport between the two regions and enhance the amity and unity of the national races living in the Union.
Implementation of projects for socio-economic development of all regions in the country

The National Poison Control Centre has emerged in accord with the guidance of Head of State Senior General Than Shwe who called for establishment of a poison control and research centre of international level in Myanmar to prevent the poisoning due to chemical and biological elements and radiation. — PHOTO: MNA

The government, in consideration of the difficulties of the students, upgraded the college into “Kalay Degree College” and then “Kalay University”. The college was upgraded into a degree college on 7th July 1999 and the degree college into a university on 14th May 2003. PHOTO: KALAY WIN THU

The government is trying its best for human resource development. Thanks to the relentless efforts of the government new universities and colleges have emerged throughout the country. The photo shows the Maubin University in Ayeyawady Division. — PHOTO: MNA
Jennifer Lopez signs deal to produce TV talk show

Los Angeles, 23 Oct — Hollywood actress-singer Jennifer Lopez has signed a deal with Universal Domestic Television to produce an hour-long daytime talk show, it was announced Monday.

The talk show, similar to ABC’s “The View,” was hosted by Lopez’s sister, New York television and radio personality Lydia Lopez. The talk show will discuss pop culture, celebrities and fashion.

Lopez said she plans to make occasional appearances on the show, which will be produced by her Nuyorican production company for launch next fall.

“At Nuyorican, our goal from the outset was to produce good, quality material that would appeal to a broad audience,” she said. “A talk show hosted by a group of smart women with diverse opinions and varied interests is tremendously exciting. We are going to have a lot of fun.”

Lisa Hackner, executive vice-president of program development and development at Universal Domestic Televisi- on, said the show will “reflect the opinions, experiences and attitudes of younger women — something that is missing from the marketplace today — and be a destination for a new generation.”

Casting is under way to round out the panel of four women who will be “likeable, intriguing, opinionated and representa- tive of a diverse group of viewers,” Hackner said.

—— MNA/Thinh

Int’l community scales up response to children orphaned by “AIDS”

Geneva, 23 Oct — An agreement on how to signific- antly scale up global response to millions of children orphaned and made vulnerable by AIDS marks a critical progress in the undertaking, said UN agencies on Tuesday.

At a high-level meeting involving key international partners working to address the complex on Tuesday, UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) wel- comed the result that major partners have agreed to a strat- egic framework for the pro- tection, care and support of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

Donors, UN agencies and international non-govern- mental organizations partici- pated in the two-day talks, in which they were expected to make new costing estimates.

According to UNAIDS, about one billion US dollars are required annually to strengthen community- based care of orphans and ensure that they stay in school.

UN agencies held that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has far reach- ing impacts on millions of children and adolescents or- phaned by the disease.

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy warned that “the crisis of orphans and other children made vul- nerable by HIV/AIDS is massive, growing and long- term. But two-thirds of coun- tries hard-hit by the disease do not have measures to en- sure the children affected are not left behind with the bare minimum of protection and care.”

The strategic framework agreed on by all partners fo- cuses on providing direct support to families and commu- nities, ensuring that chil- dren do not fall through the net.

—— MNA/Thinh

Record number of films submitted for Foreign Language Film Oscar

Los Angeles, 23 Oct — A record-breaking 55 coun- tries and regions have submitted films for consider- ation of the Oscar award in the Foreign Language Film cat- egory. Frank Pierson, president of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences on Monday.

It is the largest number of films ever entered in the For- eign Language Film category of Oscar, besting last year’s record by one film.

The academy in July in- vited 87 countries to submit their top picks for considera- tion. Over the years, 95 dif- ferent countries have sub- mitted films to the competition at least once.

Afganistan’s “Osmaha,” directed by Siddiq Barmak, is among this year’s submissions, “Wartors of Heaven and Earth,” from China, di- rected by He Ping; “Infernal Affairs,” from Hong Kong, directed by Andrew Lau and Alan Mak and “Goodbye, Dragon Inn,” from Taiwan, directed by Tsai Ming-Liang, are also among the contem- porary films.

To qualify for the award, a film must have had its public showing in a commercial theatre in its home country for at least seven con- secutive days between last November 1 and September 30, and must have been produced with a predomin- antly non-English dialogue track in the language of the submitting country.

—— MNA/Thinh

Study finds hypnosis offers long-term benefits for IBS

London, 23 Oct — Hyp- notherapy can offer long- term benefits for patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), re- searchers said on Wednes- day.

In a study of more than 200 patients, naltrex- non-English dialogue track in the language of the submitting country.

“I am very pleased with the results,” said Dr. Wendy Gonsalkorale, of the Withington Hospital in Manchester, England, told Reuters.

Patients who had under- gone hypnosis reported an improvement in symptoms, a decrease in anxiety and depression, a better quality of life and said they took fewer drugs and saw their doctors less frequently after the treatment.

“It is a viable therapeutic option for the treatment of patients with bowel syndrome,” she said in a report in the journal Gut.

IBS is not a disease but a functional disorder in which the nerves and the muscles of the bowel are extra sensi- tive. It affects an estimated 10-20 per cent of the popula- tion. Symptoms range from very mild to severe.

Gonsalkorale and her team questioned the patients about their symptoms and quality of life before and immediately after the 12-1 hour of hypnosis sessions and for up to six years after- wards.

They found that 71 per cent of patients reported well to the treatment and for most IBS sufferers the posi- tive effects did not diminish after a year, said MNA/Thinh.

The precise causes of IBS are not known but doctors believe a variety of things including food, exercise, hormones and stress may trigger the symptoms.

“There seems to be altera- tions in the muscle activity of the bowel and chemical sensiti- vity,” said Gonsalkorale.

She said hypnosis affects the body through impulses in the nerves, hormones and chemicals called neurotransmitters.

“Using hypnosis you can very specifically influence physiological mechanisms in the body. It can be very spe- cific and targeted,” Gonsalkorale added. — MNA/Thinh
China vows to further cooperation with UN

BEIJING, 23 Oct—China regards the United Nations as the “best venue for promoting democracy in international relations and implementing multilateralism” and will further cooperation with it to combat the common challenges of the world, a Chinese official said Tuesday.

Li Jizhang, assistant to the Chinese Foreign Minister, made the remarks at a celebration held by UN agencies’ local branches in China to mark United Nations Day on Oct. 24.

The traditional issues of peace and development are still in need of solutions but issues such as extreme poverty, cross-border crime, terrorism and environmental pollution pose new challenges, Li said.

Only by strengthening international cooperation, maintaining close mutual coordination, taking common action and establishing comprehensive global partnership, can mankind overcome those obstacles, Li noted.

The United Nations should take the lead in international cooperation and China resolutely supports and maintains the authority and core status of the United Nations and strengthens the role of it, Li said.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette said during the celebration.— MNA/Xinhua.

Scientists find methane bubbles could sink ships

WASHINGTON, 23 Oct—Methane bubbles from the sea floor could, in theory, sink ships and may explain the odd disappearance of some vessels, Australian researchers reported on Tuesday.

The huge bubbles can erupt from undersea deposits of solid methane, known as gas hydrates. An odourless gas found in swamps and mines, methane becomes solid under the enormous pressures found on deep sea floors.

The ice-like methane deposits can break off and become gaseous as they rise, causing cavities at the surface. — Associated Press

Ecuadoreans sue US oil firm over Amazon pollution

LAGOS AGRO (Ecuador), 23 Oct—Ecuadorian Indians wearing feathered headdresses and red face-paint marched outside a jungle courthouse on Tuesday at the start of a case accusing US oil giant ChevronTexaco of polluting the Amazon.

Before Texas, we were free. We drank from the river and the river was peaceful because we weren’t polluted,” 67-year-old Secoya Indian Esteban Lusitundance said in broken Spanish.

“Now there’s nothing. We can’t even swim.”—End

The case opened in Lagos Agro, a rundown town 100 miles north of Quito, after nine years of legal battles in the United States ended with a US Appeals Court ruling the dispute should be heard in Ecuador.

Environmentalists hope the case will set a precedent forcing companies in the developing world to observe the same anti-pollution standards demanded in rich nations.

Lawyers for 30,000 Ecuadorean plaintiffs—many of them poor Indians—have said a subsidiary of Texaco, which merged with Chevron in 2001, dumped 18.5 billion gallons of oil-laden water into rivers while it was producing crude in Ecuador’s lush Amazon jungle from 1972 to 1992. — MNA/Reuters

Hometown honours China’s first astronaut with statue

SHEYANN, 23 Oct—China’s first astronaut Yang Liwei will have his own statue along with a replica Shenzhou V spacecraft in his hometown.

The government of Huludao City, northeast China’s Liaoning Province, has announced plans to solicit design statues from all over the country to be built in the city’s Longwan New District.

“Yang” would wear his astronaut suit, said Liu Ming, mayor of Huludao.

Yang, 38, became a hero in China when he returned to Earth in a home-made space capsule after his 21-hour spaceflight, which began on October 15.

China’s first astronaut Yang Liwei, centre, meets with the United States’ first astronaut Yang Liwei, centre, meets with his wife Zhang Yumei, right, and 8-year old son, Yang Ningkang left, upon his arrival in Beijing on 16 Oct, 2003. Fresh

A Dell Aaim personal digital assistant, based on Microsoft’s Pocket PC operating system, is shown in New York, on 21 October, 2003. The unit packs plenty of power: a 400-megahertz processor, 64 megabytes of hard-disk space, 64 megabytes of flash memory, and a Wi-Fi sniffer that glows a pleasant blue when active.— Reuters

APEC leaders issue statement on health security

BANGKOK, 23 Oct—Leaders from members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum issued a statement on health security here Tuesday, calling for more efforts to strengthen the public health infrastructure to detect, respond to, and prevent bio-terrorism and naturally occurring disease outbreaks.

The statement passed at the APECEconomic Leaders Meeting said that a regional public health surveillance network and an early warning system will be set up to monitor and respond to critical disease outbreaks in the region, and critical threats such as bio-terrorism.

The severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2003, which had grave economic consequences for the region, demonstrated the importance of prevention, surveillance, detection, and coordinated responses to disease outbreaks, whether naturally occurring, like SARS, or intentionally caused, like the 2001 anthrax incidents in the United States, said the statement.

Actions will be taken to monitor diseases, contain outbreaks, especially those that could have international consequences, and coordinate responses via mechanisms such as the APEC Emerging Infections Network and the APEC Emerging Disease Intervention Centre based in Singapore to serve as a regional resource for training and research,” it added. — MNA/Xinhua

Scientists find methane bubbles could sink ships

Washington, 23 Oct—Methane bubbles from the sea floor could, in theory, sink ships and may explain the odd disappearance of some vessels, Australian researchers reported on Tuesday.

The huge bubbles can erupt from undersea deposits of solid methane, known as gas hydrates. An odourless gas found in swamps and mines, methane becomes solid under the enormous pressures found on deep sea floors.

The ice-like methane deposits can break off and become gaseous as they rise, causing cavities at the surface. — Associated Press

Ecuadoreans sue US oil firm over Amazon pollution

Lago Agro (Ecuador), 23 Oct—Ecuadorian Indians wearing feathered headdresses and red face-paint marched outside a jungle courthouse on Tuesday at the start of a case accusing US oil giant ChevronTexaco of polluting the Amazon.

Before Texas, we were free. We drank from the river and the river was peaceful because it wasn’t polluted,” 67-year-old Secoya Indian Esteban Lusitandise said in broken Spanish.

“Now there’s nothing. We can’t even swim.”—End

The case opened in Lago Agro, a rundown town 100 miles north of Quito, after nine years of legal battles in the United States ended with a US Appeals Court ruling the dispute should be heard in Ecuador.

Environmentalists hope the case will set a precedent forcing companies in the developing world to observe the same anti-pollution standards demanded in rich nations.

Lawyers for 30,000 Ecuadorean plaintiffs—many of them poor Indians—have said a subsidiary of Texaco, which merged with Chevron in 2001, dumped 18.5 billion gallons of oil-laden water into rivers while it was producing crude in Ecuador’s lush Amazon jungle from 1972 to 1992. — MNA/Reuters

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China vows to further cooperation with UN

Beijing, 23 Oct—China regards the United Nations as the “best venue for promoting democracy in international relations and implementing multilateralism” and will further cooperation with it to combat the common challenges of the world, a Chinese official said Tuesday.

Li Jizhang, assistant to the Chinese Foreign Minister, made the remarks at a celebration held by UN agencies’ local branches in China to mark United Nations Day on Octo ber 24.

The traditional issues of peace and development are still in need of solutions but issues such as extreme poverty, cross-border crime, terrorism and environmental pollution pose new challenges, Li said.

Only by strengthening international cooperation, maintaining close mutual coordination, taking common action and establishing comprehensive global partnership, can mankind overcome those obstacles, Li noted.

The United Nations should take the lead in international cooperation and China resolutely supports and maintains the authority and core status of the United Nations and strengthens the role of it, Li said.

UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette said during the celebration.— MNA/Xinhua.

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**Bruges stun champions Milan with win at San Siro**

**LONDON, 23 Oct**—Champions League holders AC Milan suffered a shock 1-0 defeat at home by Belgium’s Club Bruges in Group H on Wednesday.

The Italians dominated but a super strike from Peruvian Andres Mendoza in the 33rd minute was enough to give Bruges a famous victory and throw the group wide open.

The result means Milan are second in the group alongside Bruges on four points with Ajax Amsterdam leading on six.

Six-times European champions Milan were unable to make the most of their possession, failing to create enough chances and when they did break through a well-organized Belgian defence their strikers were unable to find the target.

Bruges had won in their seven previous away games in European competition and were without a victory in Italy since they beat AS Roma 1-0 in the UEFA Cup during the 1975-76 season.

Milan took charge from the outset and Filippo Inzaghi had an effort ruled offside in the ninth minute and then fired over the bar from a good position shortly after.

Bruges issued a warning in the 16th minute when full back Olivier De Cock forced Dida into action with a powerful drive from the edge of the area.

Too often Milan’s moves broke down in the final third with Clarence Seedorf and Brazilian Kaká both guilty of failing to provide strikers Inzaghi and Andrea Shevchenko with the service they thrive upon. Bruges took the lead in the 33rd minute after a swift attack from deep caught Milan exposed at the back.

Ivan Gvozdenovic fed Mendoza and the tall Peruvian striker cut inside before firing a superb shot with the outside of his left foot low into Dida’s bottom left corner.

It was a magnificent finish and prompted Milan into some greater urgency before the break with Seedorf firing just wide and then Cafu pushing a low ball across the face of the goal.

Milan increased the pressure after the break with Andrea Pirlo forcing a great diving save out of Dany Verlinden with a free kick and then Inzaghi missing a clear chance, firing over from point blank range as a scramble followed a corner.

**Brave Chelsea come from behind to beat Lazio**

**LONDON, 23 Oct**—Chelsea scored twice in eight second-half minutes as they came from behind to beat Lazio 2-1 thanks to goals from Frank Lampard and Adrian Mutu in their Champions League match at Stamford Bridge on Wednesday.

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9:50 Ramayana in Myanmar (Part-IV) (INDRA, the King of Deva's Bow)
9:58 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”
24-10-2003 (Friday) Regular Programmes for Viewers from Abroad Evening Transmission (15:30 - 17:30)
15:30 Signature Tune
15:32 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama”
15:36 Srivay with Magnifici cent Sight
15:40 Headline News
15:42 Easily Cooked Tasty Dishes (Short-headed Fish with Roasted Rice Soup)
15:45 National News
15:50 Traditional Chin Litu- que (Khaung Yay)
15:55 Lon-Yun Festival Dance
15:58 New, Modernized Myanmar Food
16:00 National News
16:05 The Fifth International ICT Exhibition 2003 (Part-I)
16:40 Myanmar Cuisine “Prawn Curry”
16:45 National News
16:55 Sweet-lifting Music Dance
16:58 A Trip to Inlay Lake
17:00 National News
17:05 Myanmar Profile “Fast Food”
17:10 National News
17:15 National News
17:25 Unique Biodiversity of Indawgyi Lake (Part III)
17:27 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Come and See Myanmar”
19:30 Signature Tune
19:32 Song of Myanmar Beauty & Scenic Sights “Myanmar Panorama & Myanmar Sentiment”
19:36 Making Myanmar Marionette
19:40 Headline News
19:42 Easily Cooked Tasty Dishes “Savour feast with Asparagus”
19:45 National News
19:50 Myanmar Performing Arts Competition (Short Drama) (Dhobat)
19:52 Cultural Studies
20:00 National News
20:10 Song “Cherry Present”
20:15 National News
20:20 Pa-tha-a Aung Khan Gita Than (Welcoming music a curtain raiser)
20:25 Song “A Way for Lovers”
20:30 National News
20:35 Electronic Library (Myin Mu)
20:40 Myanmar Cuisine “Traditional Moun- bane daum”
20:45 National News
20:50 Unique Biodiversity of Indawgyi Lake (Part-III)
20:55 Kitchen Dance

WEATHER
Thursday, October 23, 2003

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kai khin, Shan, Kayin, Mon States and lower Sagaing Division. Rain or thunderstorms have been isolated in Kayah State, Magway, Yangon, Ayeyarwady Divisions and scattered in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded was Bago (1.88) inches. Maximum temperature on 22-10-2003 was 34.5°C (94°F). Minimum temperature on 23-10-2003 was 20.9°C (70°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 23-10-2003 was 84%. Total sunshine hours on 22-10-2003 was 8.5 hours. Rainfall on 23-10-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2003 was 2.202 mm (06.66 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2315 mm (91.14 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2381 mm (93.74 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 43 mph from north-northeast at (21:50) hours MST on 21-10-2003. Rain incessant. Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the South Bay, West Bay and partly cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.Special features: According to the observation at 09:30 hrs MST today, yesterday’s pressure area over Gulf of Thailand still persists and move westward. Forecast valid until evening of 24-10-2003: Rain or thunder- storms are likely to be widespread in Tanintharyi Division and isolated in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%). Strong or slight Occasional squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely off and along. Most, Tanintharyi Coast and Gulf of Mottama. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-40) mph. Sea will be slight to moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Continued of thunder condition in Southern Myanmar areas. Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-10-2003: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms in the afternoon/evening. Degree of certainty is (60%). Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-10-2003: Likelihood of isolated rain or thunderstorms. Degree of certainty is (40%).
Role of transportation networks connecting all ASEAN states cannot be overemphasized in march towards single ASEAN market and regional integration

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt addresses 9th ATM

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of Ninth ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting. — MNA

YANGON, 23 Oct — The Ninth ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting launched at the Sedona Hotel here this morning, with an opening address by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt. He said:

It is a great pleasure for me to deliver the opening address at this Ninth ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting. On behalf of the Government and people of Myanmar and my own behalf, I wish to extend a warm welcome to all the Ministers, the ASEAN Secretary General and all delegates to Myanmar.

I would like to express our appreciation to the ASEAN Secretary General and the secretariat for their cooperation and support for the successful convening of this Ninth ASEAN Transport Ministers Meeting in Myanmar.

The Meeting assumes special significance as it is taking place barely a fortnight after the Ninth ASEAN Summit held in Bali. It may be recalled that at the Summit, the ASEAN Leaders adopted the ASEAN Concord II (Bali Concord II) in which they pledged to build an ASEAN Community based on the three pillars of “ASEAN Security Community”, “ASEAN Economic Community” and “ASEAN Socio-cultural Community”. The ASEAN Economic Community would include, enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity’. The leaders also agreed to accelerate regional integration in the I1 priority sectors including air travel and tourism.

The role of transportation networks connecting all ASEAN states cannot be overemphasized in our march towards a single ASEAN market and regional integration. We not only need to implement existing projects but also undertake new initiatives that would contribute towards the realization of our common goal. Notwithstanding the fact that funding remains an issue, we should explore all avenues and look for innovative means to meet our fiscal needs.

We in Myanmar believe that there can be no economic progress without adequate infrastructure development. Before the advent of our Government, transportation networks did not develop as much as they Should have for various reasons. Consequently, during our time, we have devoted attention to achieve rapid and extensive progress in the transportation sector. We have built a road and rail networks that connect all corners of the nation and our nation with all neighboring countries.

With regard to the aviation sector, 7 new airports have been constructed and 21 existing airports upgraded to accommodate larger aircraft.

Before the time of our Government, the Yangon International Airport was the only international airport. Today with the opening of the international airport in Mandalay, a second international aviation entry point to Myanmar has been added. In the near future, with the completion of airport extension (See page 9).

Myanmar National Working Committee for Women’s Affairs team tours Shan State (South)

YANGON, 23 Oct — The team led by Member of Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs and Myanmar National Working Committee for Women’s Affairs Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe met with members of ward and village WCWAs at City Hall in Taunggyi yesterday morning.

Also present on the occasion were Chairman of Shan State Peace and Development Council Commander of Eastern Command Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint and wife Daw Win Win Nu, Deputy Commander Col Win Myint and wife, officials, members of Shan State WCWA, Maternal and Child Welfare Association, social organizations, and township and village WCWAs, townswelders and local women of national races.

Secretary of Taunggyi Township WCWA Daw Nan Khin Aye extended greetings.