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

Central Committee for Observance of 56th Anniversary Independence Day meets

YANGON, 4 Nov—The Central Committee for Observance of the 56th Anniversary Independence Day held its meeting at the hall of Zeyathiri Beikman this afternoon, with an address by Chairman of the Central Committee Lt-Gen Soe Win.

Also present were Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee for Observance of the 56th Anniversary Independence Day Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win and 2 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win delivered an address. He said the meeting was held to observe the 56th Anniversary Independence Day on a grand scale with national essence like the previous years.

He said the independence day was to be held to enable the youths of today to understand the national essence of observance of the independence day, economically and culturally oppression under servitude, driving a wedge among the people in order to undermine national solidarity and (See page 2).

Joint Statement on the visit to Myanmar by
HE Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat,
Vice-President of the Republic of India

1. At the invitation of Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of the Union of Myanmar, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, HE Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Vice-President of the Republic of India paid a four-day official visit to Myanmar from 2 to 5 November 2003. The Vice-President of India HE Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising HE Mr Dvigay Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs, HE Mr Anil Kumar, Member of Parliament (RS), HE Mr B J Panda, Member of Parliament (RS), HE Mr K Sibal, Foreign Secretary, HE Mr Anil Kumar Secretary to Vice-President, HE Mr R K Bhatia, Ambassador of India to Myanmar and other senior officials.

2. The Vice-President of India and members of his entourage were accorded a warm welcome by the government and the people of Myanmar, reflecting the traditionally friendly ties between the two countries.

3. During his stay in Myanmar, Vice-President HE Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat was received by the Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, Senior General Than Shwe and the two leaders had a friendly exchange of views on matters of mutual interest. (See page 10).

Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing offer Kathina robes

YANGON, 4 Nov—The 14th Kathina robes offering ceremony of the families of the Military Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence was held at Tatmadaw Dhammayan on Azami Road here this morning, attended by Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing.

Also present on the occasion were State Ovadacariya Sayadaws, Vice-Chairmen of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department and officials.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win delivered an address. He said the meeting was held to observe the 56th Anniversary Independence Day on a grand scale with national essence like the previous years.

He said the independence day was to be held to enable the youths of today to understand the national essence of observance of the independence day, economically and culturally oppression under servitude, driving a wedge among the people in order to undermine national solidarity and (See page 2).

Sayadaws attending the 14th Kathina robes offering ceremony of families of Military Intelligence of Defence Services. — MNA

Established 1914

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Senior General Than Shwe and wife Daw Kyaing Kyaing and party receive the Five Precepts from Sayadaws at 14th Kathina robe offering ceremony of families of Military Intelligence of Defence Services. — MNA

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Goodwill Visit of Indian Vice-President

Myanmar and India are two countries that not only share common borders but enjoy close and friendly relations. The ties that bind the two nations have been built over centuries based on a shared cultural and religious heritage. The friendship between these two neighbours has been raised to new heights with the current visit of the Indian Vice-President, His Excellency Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat.

The Indian Vice-President’s visit is the first state-level visit since the visit of the Indian Prime Minister in 1987. The Indian Vice-President’s visit has made up for the long interval between visits. Myanmar and India not only concluded two bilateral agreements, one on visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders and the other regarding education and human resource developments on the very first day of the visit, but also explored new areas of cooperation.

The discussions between the leaders of Myanmar and India have confirmed the demonstrated will of the two nations to live together in peace and mutual prosperity and to foster closer ties in the years ahead. The agenda for cooperation covers such important sectors as trade and investment, road linkages, tourism, science and technology, infrastructure, and human resource development. Increased cooperation between the two countries is expected to exploit the complementarities between them.

It is notable that in recognition of India’s aspiration to become a Permanent Member of the United Nations Security Council, Myanmar expressed its willingness to support India when the issue comes up. The two countries agreed that the United Nations’ reform process should be expedited.

It is also noteworthy that the Indian External Affairs Secretary Mr Kanwal Sibal in the press conference held in Yangon during the visit confirmed the Indian Vice-President’s offer to increase the number of trainees from Myanmar to India by 25 percent and that India would provide 152 scholarships next year. It is also heartening to note that India has responded positively to Myanmar’s request for financial assistance of US$ 57 million for upgrading the Yangon-Mandalay rail line.

There is no doubt that the deep-rooted historical and cultural linkages and geographical proximity provide a case for vibrant and mutually beneficial Myanmar-India relations.

Minister for Energy inspects Nyaungdon gas and oil field in Ayeyawady Division

YANGON, 4 Nov — Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi yesterday morning visited the oil field in Nyaungdon, Ayeyawady Division.

The officials of Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise reported to the minister on production of oil at the Oil Well No 20. Next, the minister attended to the needs for exploration of new wells in Maubin and Pantanaw regions and increased production of oil and gas, and laid down the future plans.

Afterwards, the minister proceeded to the Oil Well No 20 and viewed progress of the drilling of the well and production of oil and gas. The new well produces 5.7 million cubic feet of natural gas and 21 barrels of condensate per day. MOGE found the Nyaungdon oil field in 1999. Now, it produces about 5.6 million cubic feet of natural gas and 1,320 barrels of condensate daily and distributes to the factories in Yangon through Nyaungdon-Yangon natural gas pipe lines.

Minister for PBANRDA Col Thein Nyunt delivers a speech at the coordination meeting for upgrading tasks of development activities.

Central Committee for Observance...

(from page 1)

regaining independence after three generations’ struggle in hundred years. Thus, there will be the spirit to cherish independence and sovereignty and to safeguard the Union among the new generation youths after having realized the essence and value of independence and sovereignty.

He said the people are still suffering from evil legacy of the imperialists during the period of over 100 years. He said the State has been facing attempts to dominate sovereignty and drive a wedge among the Union to break up national solidarity and is trying to ward off these situations. At such a time safeguarding independence and sovereignty has become more important for perpetuation of the Union, he added.

With the objective of perpetuation of independence and sovereignty the government is making arrangements for emergence of an enduring constitution which is the first step to become a modern developed nation in successful implementation of the seven-point future programme, he said.

The Secretary-1 urged those present to take part in the discussions on observance of the Independence Day with full national essence.

Next, Secretary of the committee Director-General of the Government’s Office U Soe Tint reported on formation of subcommittees.

Next, Chairman of Subcommittee for holding of the State Flag Hoisting and Saluting Ceremony Commander Maung Gen Myint Sve reported on tasks to be undertaken. Chairman of Reception and Dinner Subcommittee Director-Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win, Chairman of Information and Exhibition Subcommittee Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Aung Thein, Chairman of Essay, Poem, TV Quiz and Computer Painting Competition Subcommittee Deputy Minister for Education Brig-Aung Soe Win Maung, Chairman of Independence Day Message Compilation Subcommittee Deputy Minister for Education U Myo Nyunt, Chairman of Entertainment Subcommittee Vice-Major Col Maung Pa and Chairman of Health Subcommittee Deputy Minister for Health Dr Myo Oo reported on their tasks. Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint also reported on arrangements for sports in commemoration of the Independence Day. A general round of discussions then followed. The meeting came to a close with the remark by the Secretary-1 — APNA

Ayeeyawady Division Development Affairs Department meets

YANGON, 4 Nov — Minister for Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt, accompanied by Director-General of Development Affairs Department Col Myo Myint and officials, attended at the coordination meeting for upgrading the development tasks of Ayeyawady Division Development Affairs Department held at the hall of Pathein Township Development Affairs Department on 2 November afternoon.

The minister gave instructions on greening and beautifying the township, water supply tasks, and implementation of rural and urban development tasks dutifully. Chairman of the Ayeyawady Division Development Affairs Department Col Maung Pa and Chairman for Development Affairs Col Thein Nyunt explained the future tasks and requirements.

The minister expressed the future tasks and urged them to carry out the tasks quickly. The chairman of the subcommittee reported on the five procedures. Afterwards, township WVOCs made reports and the chairman of the subdivision WVOC presented a supplementary report. The minister attended to the requirements.

Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Aung Thein Tin Lwin gives instructions on future tasks to officials of department at No 1 meeting hall of the City Hall on 4 November.

Central Committee for Observance...
Aziz says Saddam was sure he would survive invasion

WASHINGTON, 4 Nov — Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein did not order a counterattack when US troops began marching into Iraq because he thought the ground thrust was a ruse and was convinced he would survive invasion, The Washington Post reported on Monday.

Former Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz, who surrendered in April, told interrogators that after meeting with Russian and French intermediaries, Saddam was convinced that he could avoid a war, the newspaper said, citing US officials.

The report said Aziz told interrogators that French and Russian intermediaries assured Saddam during late 2002 and early this year that they would block a US-led war through delays and vetoes at the UN Security Council.

The report said there was a reassurance from French and Russian contacts convinced that the United States would not launch an immediate invasion of Iraq, according to Aziz’s statements as described by US officials, the newspaper reported.

Aziz told interrogators that Saddam was so sure of himself that refused to order an immediate military response when he heard reports that American ground forces were pouring into Iraq he concluded that the crossing was some sort of feint, the newspaper said.

US officials involved in the interrogations were cited as saying that Aziz’s account hadn’t been corroborated by other sources.

According to the newspaper, US-led investigators also asked other former high-ranking Iraqi detainees why, if Saddam did not have weapons of mass destruction, was he willing to let the world believe that he did.

The report said that several detainees said they believe that Saddam was afraid to lose face with his Arab neighbours if he believed he had nothing to fear because he feared he had weapons of mass destruction. — MNA/Reuters

Gibraltar allows ship of sick tourists to dock

GIBRALTAR, 4 Nov — Gibraltar said it would allow a cruise ship that has been stranded in the Mediterranean with hundreds of sick British tourists to dock on Monday but that infected people would not be allowed off the vessel.

The Aurora has been steaming toward Gibraltar, a tiny British colony on the southern coast of Spain, ever since leaving the Greek port of Piraeus on Friday when authorities there refused to permit it to dock at Piraeus.

The Aurora, steaming toward Gibraltar since leaving the Greek port of Piraeus on Friday when authorities there refused to allow passengers or crew to get off.

Doctors in Greece treated the passengers and loaded the cruise ship with medical supplies for patients suffering from diarrhoea and vomiting.

But Gibraltar said the outbreak of viral gastroenteritis was nearly over with only 11 people sick out of 559 who had been affected by the 24-hour virus. There were no new cases on Sunday, Gibraltar said.

“The Gibraltar Government will allow the P&O Cruise Ship Aurora to enter Gibraltar and for her healthy passengers to disembark, as normal, as occurred in Venice and Dubrovnik,” the government said in a statement released late on Sunday. “As a precaution passengers who have suffered or shown symptoms of the virus at any time after midnight last Thursday will not be allowed to come ashore,” the statement said.

Some 1,900 tourists and 837 crew were on board the ship, which left Southampton on October 20 on a 17-day round trip.

“There is no need for the general public in Gibraltar to be concerned, and we should welcome these visitors to Gibraltar as usual,” Tourism Minister Joe Holliday said in the statement. — MNA/Reuters

Boao Forum described as indispensable driving force

BOAO (Hainan), 4 Nov — World Economic Forum president Klaus Schwab Sunday described the ongoing Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) as the most vivid expression of the continent, and particularly China, and a strong indispensable driving force of the world economy.

Professor Schwab, founder of the World Economic Forum (WEF), told the BFA’s second annual conference that like the WEF, the BFA is “such a platform providing a framework not just for dialogue but for a process of jointly defining the challenges and objectives and, if possible, jointly creating solutions.”

The international trading system is facing a dangerous impasse in negotiations as is evident in the failed talks in Cancun, said Schwab. He urged leaders attending the BFA annual conference not to give up on the most important round of talks, and continue to build and invest in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

The proliferation of bilateral and regional trading arrangements should not come at the detriment, or as a replacement, of multilateralism, he said. “Let us be mindful that bilateral and regional arrangements very often exclude the smallest and poorest members of the WTO — the very members that we must strive to integrate more fully and more equitably in the international trading system.”

Schwab called on China, a relatively new WTO member, to play an important role in bridging the North-South divide which has been exacerbated by the recent round of talks within the WTO.

He said the world is witnessing a global economic recovery, which is under way but marked by precarious imbalances in the macro-economic, as well as in the financial, monetary and fiscal systems. — MNA/Xinhua

US postwar glow dimmed by growing Iraqi violence

CHANTHAM (Texas), 4 Nov — The triumphal postwar glow in which US President George W Bush once taunted Iraqi militants by saying “bringing them on” has faded to a grim determination against a resistance growing more deadly.

“It’s getting worse, in the sense that, as today... We’ve seen a much more sophisticated use of improvised explosive devices against coalition forces,” the top US civil administrator in Iraq, Paul Bremer, said on CNN’s “Late Edition” on Sunday.

But the Bush Administration vowed that it will not retreat, and Bush continues to cite his Iraq policy as an accomplishment despite accusations of a widening “credibility gap”. Bush was at his ranch in Texas on Sunday and made no comment after a guerilla attack on a US helicopter in Iraq killed 15 soldiers. — MNA/Reuters

Rumsfeld calls attack “tragic day” for US

WASHINGTON, 4 Nov — US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Sunday marked the bloodiest attack yet on American troops in Iraq by reaffirming the administration’s resolve to defeat terrorism and conceding “we are going to have tragic days as this”.

Yet some congressional Democrats and Republicans questioned how the strike on a US helicopter was able to occur, and said US troop levels may need to be increased to bolster security.

With a new poll showing Americans split on whether the war with Iraq was worth fighting, Rumsfeld urged patience and argued it was better to battle “terrorist networks” overseas than at home. “Clearly it is a tragic day for Americans, and for these young men and women,” Rumsfeld told ABC’s “This Week” shortly after a US helicopter was shot down near Baghdad, killing at least 15 American personnel. — MNA/Reuters

Over half Chinese cities suffer underground water shortage

Beijing, 4 Nov.— A report from the Ministry of Land and Resources says over half of China’s 668 cities are facing severe shortages of underground water, according to Monday’s China Daily.

Illnesses related to unhygienic water still exist in many areas, leaving over 70 million people using sub-standard underground water, said the report, which is based on the country’s second national survey on underground water resources started from 2001 and ended earlier this year.

The country’s extraction of underground water has increased by an average annual rate of 2.5 billion cubic metres over the past two decades and reached a total of 119.1 billion cubic metres last year, said Jiang Jianjun, director of the Geological Environment Department in the ministry.

Only 63 per cent of China’s urban areas enjoy underground water that is potable without treatment, according to the English-language newspaper. — MNA/Xinhua

British soldiers remove stones from a street in the centre of Basra, southern Iraq, on Tuesday, 4 Nov, 2003. After Iraqi street cleaners demonstrated, demanding their salaries which were not paid over the past two months. — MNA/Xinhua

A US Army soldier from the 720th Military Police Battalion, right, waits as an elderly Iraqi man gets out of a car before searching the vehicle on the outskirts of Tikrit, 193 km (120 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, on Monday, 3 November, 2003. The battalion, assisted by Iraqi police was searching for contraband weapons that could be used by guerillas, a routine operation that has taken on added urgency since guerillas shot down a Chinook helicopter with a missile, killing 16 soldiers and wounding 21 others. — Internet

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 5 November, 2003 3
Coalition in Iraq orders release of Iranian journalists

LONDON, 4 Nov — The Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq has ordered the release of two Iranian journalists who were arrested by US forces in July for filming at a military checkpoint, the British Foreign Office said in a press release issued on Monday.

The US forces have now ended their investigation and have informed the respective authorities in Iran of the release of the two Iranians, a Foreign Office spokesman said. He added that the coalition authorities were not able to contact the two men to be returned to Iran and reunited with their families. The spokesman said.

Britain has been in contact with the United States and Iranian governments throughout the detention of Karimi and Abutaleb, and has intervened at a senior level to press for the investigation to be brought to an early conclusion, he added. On the news of the release of the two Iranians, a Foreign Office spokesman said it was unfortunate that these two journalists were caught up in the stringent security regime currently in place in Iraq.

After several fatal attacks on Coalition forces at checkpoints, the Coalition authorities could not afford to take any chances. But we are pleased that the issue has now been resolved and the men are now on their way home,” the spokesman said.

Vietnam, China to strengthen auditing cooperation

HANOI, 4 Nov — Vietnam wants to establish a close relationship with China’s national auditing sector, which will help further the comprehensive relation between the two countries.

Vietnamese Prime Minister Phan Van Khai made the remark while meeting with the visiting Auditor-General of China’s National Audit Office, Li Jinhu, in Hanoi on Monday. Khai said Vietnam hopes China will help the country in training its auditors, and the two countries will exchange auditing experiences frequently, because China is much experienced in auditing.

“We can annually exchange experiences and hold seminars on how to boost the audit activity. For example, how to audit infrastructure construction works well, how to audit state spending on state agencies or large state-owned enterprises,” he said.

During the talks, Li briefed Khai on the state auditing sector in China, saying top government leaders have attached great importance to the sector which has two main tasks: preventing losses of state assets and coordinating with the state inspection sector to fight against corruption.

Iraqi firms inflate US contract bids to cover high cost

WASHINGTON, 4 Nov — Many Iraqi companies bidding for US sub-contracts in Iraq are inflating prices to cover the high cost of borrowing from a European bank, a US lawyer said on Monday. Timothy Mills, a senior partner for the law firm Patton Boggs who has more than half his time in Iraq, told a Senate Democratic Policy Committee hearing that small and medium-sized Iraqi companies were forced to borrow from family-dominated Iraqi entities who imposed onerous conditions.

“This has the effect of substantially driving up the contract price paid for out of US funds,” Mills told the hearing, called by Democrats to look at contracting abuses.

The US Government has awarded billions of dollars in contracts to US companies to rebuild Iraq, who have in turn sub-contracted chunks of work to Iraqi firms.

Two US civilians killed in Iraq bomb attack

BAGHDAD, 4 Nov — Two US civilians were killed in a bomb attack in western Iraq on Sunday, bringing the US-led coalition’s death toll in the single day to 18, the US military said.

The two American civilian contractors died in a roadside bomb attack on their convoy in Fallujah, a restive town 50 kilometre west of Baghdad, said the military.

In a third incident, a soldier from the US 1st Armored Division was killed on patrol when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb in Baghdad. The latest toll was the heaviest in a day witnessed since US President George W. Bush declared the major conflict in Iraq over on 1 May.

Security situation in Iraq’s “Sunni Triangle” a “mixed bag”

BAGHDAD, 4 Nov — US civil administrator in Iraq Paul Bremer said the security situation in the so-called “Sunni Triangle” was a “mixed bag,” after a US helicopter was apparently shot down by guerrillas on Sunday.

“I’d say it’s a mixed bag,” Bremer in an interview with CNN.

He said the situation in central northern Iraq is getting better in a sense that more and more Iraqis north of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein’s hometown, are coming up to cooperate with the US-led coalition forces in maintaining the security. “It’s getting worse in a sense that as today it seems that the sun is coming up, there are using more sophisticated strategies and techniques to attack our forces,” he added.

He made the remark after a US military transport helicopter was shot down by an unidentified weapon near Fallujah, a restive town located within the “Sunni Triangle” north and west of Baghdad.

Another US soldier was killed on patrol in his vehicle when it hit a roadside bomb in Baghdad before dawn Sunday.

China issues guide to environmental education in schools

BEIJING, 4 Nov — China’s Ministry of Education on Sunday issued a guide to introducing environmental education at primary and middle schools, making environmental education an indispensable part of the country’s education for young people.

According to the guide, primary and middle schools should not only offer students knowledge on nature and ecology, but also foster students’ skills, attitudes and values conducive to sustainable development.

The Guide to Environmental Education in Primary and Middle Schools includes suggestions on activities for different age groups and encourages teachers involving different subjects and discussions in environmental education.

Poll finds nation split between Bush, Democrats

WASHINGTON, 4 Nov — One year before the next presidential election, Americans are evenly divided between US President George W Bush and a Democratic challenger, a new Washington Post-ABC News poll showed on Sunday.

Support for Bush has fallen to the point where 48 per cent of those surveyed said they would vote for him if the election were held today, while 47 per cent said they would vote for the Democratic Party’s nominee. Five per cent said they did not know. The findings demonstrate that three years after one of the closest and most bitterly contested elections in US history, in which Bush narrowly defeated former Vice-President Al Gore, the nation is once again polarized.

The poll also was released in advance of elections on Tuesday in which governor’s races in two southern states could provide an early indication of Republican chances and the strength of the president’s coattails before next year’s general elections.

Bush’s approval rating, which topped 90 per cent after the attacks of September 11, 2001, was at 56 per cent, with 42 per cent giving him a negative review, according to the poll. Bush received better marks for his handling of the war on terror than for Iraq and his stewardship of the economy.

Bush’s approval ratings have been dragged down in recent polls by mounting public concern over the costs of the war in Iraq, where ongoing attacks continue to claim American lives and stem the US effort to stabilize the country. The poll found opinion had risen to the amount America is spending in the war, on 64 per cent against the 87 billion US dollars Bush requested to fund military and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, as said in a Senate hearing on 3 November. Poll respondents also said they were concerned about job losses and the US mission in Iraq. Fifty-four per cent of the 1,003 surveyed said they thought the war in Iraq was worth fighting, while 44 per cent said it was not.

Those polled rated the economy negatively by a 2-1 margin, though they were questioned before the government released figures showing strong growth in the third quarter.
Iraqi villagers celebrate US helicopter hit

IRAQ (Baghdad), 4 Nov — Iraqis in the village of Baisa say they could not have asked for a better present during Ramadan — a US helicopter shot down in their fields.

"We usually celebrate Ramadan at the end of the month. Now we are celebrating in the beginning after these infidels Americans were shot down," taxi driver Abdullah Hissein said.

As more US helicopters patrolled over this typical Iraqi farming village on Monday, he said: "Now we want to take them down as well."

Fifteen American soldiers were killed on Sunday when a missile struck their Chinook helicopter — the bloodiest single strike on US troops since the fall of Saddam Hussein in April.

An Iraqi soldier was booted out in Baisa, located in Iraq's Sunni Muslim heartland from where Saddam drew much of his support, in the weeks leading up to the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

Iraqis said US troops, who often come under attack from roadside bombs or rocket-propelled grenades in the nearby town of Falluja, had swept through the village hunting guerrillas.

People who failed to provide information on fighters were arrested after US troops conducted aggressive searches.

"I know of several people who were arrested, including the local cleric and his family," farmer Kareem Mansour said. "They put sacks over people's heads and took them away."

US officials have repeatedly blamed fighters loyal to Saddam and Muslim militants who cross the border from neighbouring countries for attacks that have killed at least 136 American troops since President George W Bush declared major combat over on 1 May.

A few Baisa residents said they knew of a Syrian man who trained guerrillas. Others said Saddam's supporters were behind the violence.

They said US troops made even more enemies on Sunday night.

"They just shoot at anything. They heard a noise and then they shot at one of our cows. When we stood on the roof and shone a light, they shot the lamp," said Hussein Issawi, a customs official. — MNA/Reuters

Vietnam anticipates increased cooperation with China

HAIPHONG (Hainan), 4 Nov — Vietnam hopes that its cooperation with China will continue to develop, Vietnamese Deputy Prime Minister Vu Khoan said here Monday.

He told the 2003 Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Conference in China's southernmost Hainan Province, "We are encouraged to witness the rapid growth of bilateral ties in trade, production and investment."

Vietnam wished to expand the cooperation between Hainan Province and Vietnamese provinces on Baite Gulf, he said, noting that Vietnam also expected to further strengthen its cooperation with all Asian countries and regions.

Nearly 50 per cent of Vietnam's export income and 70 per cent of its foreign investment came from Asia, he said.

"Vietnam has been actively involved in the ASEAN-Free Trade Area (AFTA), the 10+3 cooperation mechanism between ASEAN and China, Japan, and South Korea, the Mekong sub-region cooperation framework, the ASEAN-China and ASEAN-India free-trade-area negotiations, and other cooperation mechanisms," he said.

The rapid development in Asia had helped assert the continent's vital role in the world economy and global cooperation, he said, adding that the world's prosperity and the expansion of international economic and trade cooperation was, to a notable extent, dependent on Asia's economic development.

However, he acknowledged, Asian countries were at different levels of development and many were still backward agriculture-based economies in a disadvantaged position in international competition.

Intra-Asia cooperation remained limited and Asian economies hinge heavily on ties with other continents, where they faced with a lot of uncertainty and barriers.

Moreover, he expressed the hope that the BFA conference would produce useful ideas on ways to promote Asia's economic growth and advance sustained cooperation among Asian nations. — MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia export, import up in September

JAKARTA, 4 Nov — Indonesia's export in September this year reached 5.05 billion US dollars or 1.92 per cent higher than the previous month, according to the Central Bureau of Statistic (BPS) here Monday.

But, the figure in September was still lower than the same month last year which saw an export of 5.14 billion US dollars, the Deputy of Economic Statistics of the BPS Slamet Mukono said.

Mukono said that the cumulative export by September this year was 45.7 billion US dollars or 7.49 per cent higher as against the same period last year.

The deputy said that the slight increase of export in September was mainly for the increase of non-oil and gas exports which totalled 3.88 billion US dollars or 4.54 per cent higher than the previous month.

MNA/Xinhua

US Air Force medical personnel assist wounded US soldiers walking out of a C-17 transport aircraft at Ramstein air base in southwestern Germany, on 3 November, 2003. The soldiers were injured when a US Chinook helicopter was shot down near Falluja in central Iraq on Sunday, killing 16 and wounding 21 troops. — Internet

Most EU citizens see US as greatest threat to world peace

BRUSSELS, 4 Nov — A total of 68 per cent of the European Union's (EU) citizens believe that the military intervention in Iraq this year was not justified, a poll result showed.

The final result of the poll, conducted by EOS Gallup Europe upon the request of the European Commission, the EU's executive, was released here Monday.

With 7,315 citizens interviewed in October, the poll showed that 41 per cent of the EU respondents confirmed their belief that the war was "not justified at all."

Greece is on the top of the list of 15 EU countries, with 96 per cent citizens against the war, followed by Austria with 86 per cent.

On the question of who should manage the rebuilding of Iraq, 58 per cent EU citizens prefer the United Nations. Only 18 per cent of respondents choose the United States.

Based on this result, 65 per cent of the EU citizens say that the United States should pay for the costs it incurred as a result of the war and provide the bulk of the funding needed for Iraq reconstruction.

Even 53 per cent of the people in the EU view the United States as a threat to the world peace. In the four EU member states of Greece, Spain, Finland and Sweden, the United States is deemed as the greatest threat to world peace.

Although EU officials explained at the midday news briefing Monday that the poll result does not represent the bloc's viewpoint, some media reports take this as a true picture of the public opinion on the issue. — MNA/Xinhua

Mexico protests new US law against bio-terrorism

MEXICO CITY, 4 Nov — Mexico has proposed a US law against bio-terrorism to be implemented next month, a senior official said Monday.

The new law, which will take effect on December 12, requires foreign exporters and producers to provide the US Food and Drug Administration with records including the description of the product, information on the exporters and producers and the planned date for the entry of shipment into the United States.

Mexican food producers and exporters will be affected by this measure which, according to some businessmen of the sector, will turn into a "lock" that leaves half of Mexican companies outside the US market.

However, Mexican Agriculture Minister Javier Usabiaga said on Monday that Mexico is forced to abide by the new law, as it is part of the internal legislation of the United States. — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua

Most Asian nations, — economic growth and advance sustained cooperation among

An intra-Asia cooperation remained limited and Asian economies hinge heavily on ties with other continents, where they faced with a lot of uncertainty and barriers.

Moreover, he expressed the hope that the BFA conference would produce useful ideas on ways to promote Asia's economic growth and advance sustained cooperation among Asian nations. — MNA/Xinhua

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Wednesday, 5 November, 2003

Vietna
US military upholds TV cover ban on Iraq coffins

BEIJA, 4 Nov.— The US military said on Monday it was sticking to a policy forbidding television camera crews and photographers from filming coffins of soldiers killed in Iraq at a US air base in southwestern Germany.

Officials at Ramstein, a major US air base which serves as a transfer point, had allowed media access in the past to honour guard ceremonies and transfers of American-flag covered coffins onto US-bound military transport planes, but rules banning coverage were strictly enforced just before the Iraq war began.

While US officials say the policy was created out of respect for relatives, others criticize the lack of media access, arguing its aim is to prevent the public from seeing large numbers of coffins that could turn opinion against the war. “You can argue both sides,” said one US official who asked not to be identified. “Some say Americans need to see this, it is factual and the public needs to see (the coffins). Yet you also think of the mourn of a killed soldier and the trauma of seeing television pictures of her son being repatriated.”

Journalists seeking access to Ramstein to film coffins of 15 Americans killed on Sunday in Iraq when their helicopter was shot down were told that Department of Defense policy was still “No”. Only coverage of arriving injured soldiers was permitted.

“The DOD policy is that there is no media coverage of deceased military personnel returning to or departing from Ramstein Air Force base or Dover Air Force base,” said Major Bill Bigelow, US European command spokesman in Stuttgart. A Defence Department official denied there was any censorship and said the purpose of the policy was to protect the privacy of families “during their times of greatest loss and grief.” The rule has been in effect since 1991 and was reaffirmed in March, he said.

However in recent years the rule was relaxed and television journalists in Germany were able to cover honour guard ceremonies, including the transfer of coffins of soldiers killed in an attack on the USS Cole and the war in Afghanistan.

“During ‘Enduring Freedom’ the DoD did make some exceptions in the policy,” said Major Mike Young, public affairs chief for the 36th air lift wing in Ramstein.

“Since ‘Iraq Freedom’ started the DoD said we are going to enforce the policy. For the past year we haven’t done any (media coverage) on reason. “— MNA/Reuters

UN almost finished with pullout of Baghdad staff

UNITED NATIONS, 4 Nov.— The United Nations has almost completed its pullout of international staff from Baghdad and the handful still there will leave shortly, UN officials said on Monday.

The staff are being taken to Cyprus pending a UN assessment of security in Baghdad, where the US-led occupation force is under almost daily attack.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the withdrawal last week after a day briefing at the International Committee of the Red Cross offices in which 12 people died.

That was a further shock to the foreign aid community in the country after the UN offices there on 19 August which killed 20 people. Annan said on Monday that the UN should all be out or on their way out,” he said. Other UN officials said the last of the remaining four aircraft would leave shortly.

Security officials are joining the UN crew from Baghdad in Cyprus. For about two weeks before deciding whether the staff would leave entirely or return. “— MNA/Reuters

Indonesian airlines prepare for busy holiday season

JAKARTA, 4 Nov.— With the Idul Fitri holiday and year-end festivities approaching, Indonesian airlines are preparing extra flights and promising better services.

Many airlines are preparing extra flights and promising better services.

“During ‘Enduring Freedom’ the DOD policy is that there is no media coverage of deceased military personnel returning to or departing from Ramstein Air Force base or Dover Air Force base,” said Major Bill Bigelow, US European command spokesman in Stuttgart.
Border area development (Kengtung East Region)

Myint Soe (Na-ta-la)

(Continued from yesterday)

There was a quiet hamlet by Namma Creek immediately after peace was restored in the region on 30 June 1989, and nothing more. Development pace of the region was high though it rose up from nothing. In 1995, the Dwengawar Shwe Zeti, Nyinchanay Zeti and Nagaphyu Zeti had been built in Mongla. The Hiyunglawnamu (Re-clining Buddha Image) Park and Kengtung Museum containing the life of Buddha had been opened. The region, complete with the Mongla Hotel, resort hotels and gems showrooms, had become a destination of hundreds of thousands of travelers. Middle school opened in 1989 had been upgraded into a high school. The hospital, TV transmission station, Mongla Hydel Power Plant, People's Sports Grounds, the Mongla newspaper house, and the Kyelinyaung newspaper house had been constructed. Nampan hydel power plant and Wanton Dam were under construction. Shwepyi Highway and Shwepyi Bridge were opened on 15 November 1995. The names were given by the Secretary I himself (Now Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt). The Mongla Hotel was also opened the same day.

No word can sufficiently describe the development of Mongla region today. Mongla is now magnified in advanced hotels, markets, and departmental stores. With emerging urban development, water supply system of the town has improved. Old Mongla hamlet is still kept intact for remembrance of things in the past. It is the symbol of development of Mongla which rose up from a quiet hamlet. Primary school had to be opened without proper signboard but new buildings of the high school emerged there. Mongla hospital has been upgraded into a 5-bed hospital.

As peace had been restored in Shan State (East), regional development tasks were carried out in Kengtung, Mongyaw, Mongkhai, Mongnyaung, Taphwe, Tawngyi, Mongin, and Monghaung Townships. As construction of roads and bridges plays a major role in regional development, many new roads have been built in the eastern region in a reign of Kengtung including Mongnyaung-Mongwa road, Mongnyaw-Mongnyu road, Kyetootaung-Mongpa road, Mongyan-Hsuli road, Mongyu-Mongne-Wantapyu-240 miles road, Kengtung-Tarpung-Mongla-Monga road, Hsuli-Monga road, Mongyan-Mongbyan-Haungtaung road, Wunyan-Munwan road, Mongpauk-Panhsan road, Mongyawng-Wanpi-Kenggon road, Mongkai-Mongtin-Lanhsat road, Kengtung-Mongkhun road, Mongyawng-Pawso road, Mongyawng-Mongka-Lweh road, Mongkhai-Walbote road, Namnaw-Mongkha-Lweh road, Mongpyung-Loekha road.

A total of ten bridges including Wantapin, Wantaut, Mongkey, Walbote, Haungthu, Hoikho, Namna, Sotlwe, Namlan, and Namlan creek bridges have been constructed in the region. Besides Mongla hospital, eleven clinics have been opened in Mongkai-Kyainglat (Walton), Wanton, Mongkhon (Wanphang), Mongyu and Mongma. Even a place like Wantkyin-Hsambuent has a clinic.


It is national duty for...

It is national duty for national heritage preserved by the ancestors for thousands of years. They wish to learn some-
Prime Minister attends prize-presentation ceremony of 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

YANGON, 4 Nov.—The prize-presentation ceremony for the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions was held at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyauk Road in Dagon Township at 1 pm on 3 November, attended by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt. Also present on the occasion were Patron for Organizing the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, wife of Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win and wife Daw Than Than Nwe, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and wife Daw Khin Khan Win, members of Panel of patrons, Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife, ministers and their wives, the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, the Auditor-General, the Chairman of Civil Service Selection and Training Board, the Yangon Mayor, senior military officers, deputy ministers, members of the Leading Committee, the Work Committee and the Sub-Committees, the diplomats, charged d’affaires, military attaches of foreign missions in Yangon, the representatives of UN agencies and officials, the director-general of the State Peace and Development Council Office, heads of department, local and foreign journalists, members of Union Solidarity and Development Associations and social organizations, members of Central Board of Judges and State/Division Board of Judges, supervisors and managers from States and Divisions, the participants, students of the University of Culture (Yangon), guests and others.

Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win presented the first prize for professional level (women) Maha Gita song competition to Daw Aye Myat Noe Khin of Yangon Division; the first prize for higher education level (women) Maha Gita song competition to Ma Khin Mya Thet Hnin of Yangon Division; the second to Ma The Myat Soe of Yangon Division and the third to Ma Htet Htet Maw of Yangon Division; the first prize for basic education (aged 15-20) level (women) Maha Gita song competition to Ma Aye Myat Noe Khin of Yangon Division, the second to Ma Cherry Win of Bago Division, the third to Ma Chaw Su San of Ayeyawady Division and the consolation prizes to Ma Nwe Nwe Thiri of Rakhine State and Ma Hla Yi of Mon State; the first prize for basic education level (aged 10-15) (women) Maha Gita song competition to Ma Phyo Sin Thu (a) Ma Sabai Phyu Thein of Yangon Division and the consolation prize to Ma Zin Pyi Pyi Phyo of Ayeyawady Division, the first prize for basic education level (aged 5-10) (women) Maha Gita song competition to Ma Kyi Kyi of Kachin State, the second to Ma Phyo Zar Myo Myint of Mon State and the third to Ma Pwint Phyu Wa of Sagaing Division.

Next, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein presented the first prize for professional level (men) religious song competition to U San Lwin of Rakhine State, the second to U Min Han of Mon State, the third to U Min Ye Tun of Yangon Division and the consolation prize to U Myo Myint of Shan State; the first prize for amateur level (men) religious song competition to Maung Ye Hiek of Mon State, the second to U Ye Thwe of Mandalay Division and U Hein Lin of Ayeyawady Division and the third to U Zaw Min Tun of Yangon Division; the first prize for higher education level (men) religious song competition to Maung Sai Nyo Min of Shan State; the second to Maung Htein Lin Aung of Mon State and the third to Maung On Mya Tun of Rakhine State; the first prize for basic education level (aged 15-20) (men) religious song competition to Maung Zeya Pyi Phyo of Sagaing Division, the second to Maung Chan Phyo of Sagaing Division and the consolation prize to Maung Mayit Naw Myo of Kachin State; the first prize for basic education level (aged 10-15) (men) religious song competition to Maung Thiha Kyaw of Kachin State, the second to Maung Hein Htoo of Bago Division, the third to Maung Htein Lin Aung of Mon State and the third to U San Lwin of Rakhine State; the first prize for basic education level (aged 5-10) (men) religious song competition to Maung Aung Kyaw Phyo of Yangon Division, the second to Maung Lin Htet Kyaw of Bago Division, the third to Maung Chan Phyo of Sagaing Division and the consolation prize to Maung Sithu Tun of Taninthayi Division.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe presented the first prizes for professional level (women) religious song competition to Daw Khine Zin Shwe of Rakhine State and Daw Kyu Kyu Kyu of Sagaing Division, the second to Daw Thabye of Mandalay Division and the third to Daw Ohma of Bago Division; the first prize for amateur level (women) religious song competition to Daw Swe Myint of Yangon Division, the second to Daw Thuzau Aung of Yangon Division and the third to Daw Khin Myo Aye of Rakhine State; the first prizes for higher education level (women) religious song competition to Ma Nwe Nwe Thiri Aung of Shan State and Ma Mu Mu Swe of Yangon Division, the second to Ma Khin Thi Thu Tun of Bago Division and Ma Thida Moe of Rakhine State and the third to Ma The Myat Soe of Yangon Division; the first prize for basic education level (aged 15-20) (women) religious song competition to Ma Cherry Win of Bago Division, the second to Ma Khin Mya Thein Hnin of Yangon Division, the third to Ma Htet Htet Aung of Yangon Division and the consolation prize to Ma Khin Thet Su of Rakhine State; the first (See page 9)
Prime Minister attends prize-presentation...

(See page 8)
It is national duty for…

honour to members of panel of judges for song contest and xylophone contest.

Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Hla Myin Swe presented certificates of honour to members of panel of judges for piano contest and xylophone contest.

Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Hla wa presented certificates of honour to members of panel of judges for oboe contest and violin contest.

Minister for Education U Than Aung presented certificates of honour to members of panel of judges for violin contest and mandolin contest.

Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Hay Oo presented certificates of honour to members of panel of judges for Dominon contests, orchestra contest and Ozi and Dobut contest.

Mayor of Yangon Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein presented certificates of honour to secretaries of panel of judges for music competitions, maestros who gave lectures on performing arts in the states and divisions, singers, leaders of the respective teams from states and divisions and those who acted as masters of ceremonies at the competitions.

On behalf of the maestros and judges, U Ye Htut, member of panel of judges for oboe contest spoke words of thanks followed by entertainment programme.

Daw Kyu Kyu Khang of Sagaing Division, winner of gold medal in song contest (professional level) sang the song Myanmar Beauty and Myanmar Life composed by U Kyaw San Lay of Sagaing Division, winner of gold medal in song contest (professional contest).

Tawngchit Tin Nwee of Magway Division and Daw Thida Lin of Yangon Division, winners of gold medal in dance contest (professional level).

Maung Kyaw Thu Win of Mandalay Division and Ma Aye Nanda Htet of Yangon Division, gold medal winners in dance contest (basic level age-10-15) entertained the audience with dance. Artist Myint Myint Kyi presented the song Kyazayamun with the accompanyment of piano played by Sandaya Thet Swe.

Maung Phyo Thein Aung and group of Sagaung Division, gold medal winner in orchestra contest for the age 5 to 10 level showed their artistic skills.

Panel of judges and singers sang the song composed by Gataluma U Ko Ko Min. The 9th MYTCPAC and female artists presented dances to the audience.

Arthediner, Prime Minister General Kyin Nyunt presented cash awards to maestros and artists.

After the certificate presentation ceremony, a dinner was hosted in honour of maestros and members of panel of judges.

Dignitaries attending the prize presentation ceremony of the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.

Prime Minister presents a certificate of honour to a doyen artist at the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.
Implementation of projects for socio-economic development of all regions in the country

Human resource development plays a vital role in national development. Therefore, efforts are being made to promote the basic education sector.

The photo taken on 9 August shows the newly-constructed building of No 8 BEPS in Shwepyitha Township.

PHOTO: MNA

Under the education promotion programme, measures are being taken to develop the basic education sector.

The photo shows the new school building for No 2 Basic Education Middle School in Nyaungywa Village, Hlinethaya Township, Yangon North District, which was opened on 23 August 2003.

PHOTO: MNA

Opening of two-storey school building of BEPS No 6 in progress in Ward 168, Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township on 20 July 2003. As over 400 are attending the school, it is necessary to build more schools because the buildings of the school will not be enough for the students in the long term.

PHOTO: MNA
China develops world’s first TD-SCDMA 3-G mobile phone set

Chongqing, 4 Nov — China has developed its first 3-G mobile phone set, and it is also the first TD-SCDMA phone of its kind in the world, its developers say.

Professor Zhen Jianhong, in charge of the development project sponsored by the Chongqing Institute of Posts and Telecommunications, said the phone was developed independently with all the intellectual property rights.

Compared with GSM, TDMA digital mobile phones, or 2-G mobile phones, and their predecessor analogue mobile phones, the 3-G phones are more powerful telecommunication tools.

The 3-G mobile phone is widely considered as the future of mobile telecommunications, capable of providing such services as Internet webpage browsing, teleconferencing, and electronic commerce.

American doctors no longer back anti-poison remedy

CHICAGO, 4 Nov — Syrup of ipecac, long recommended as a vomit inducer for children who have swallowed poison, may not work, can be misused and no longer should be kept at home, doctors said on Monday.

Instead, the first step a parent or caregiver should take is to call a poison control centre to determine if the child can be treated on the scene or needs to be evaluated in the hospital, said doctors at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Pediatrics, which represents child specialists in the United States and Canada. It reverses a recommendation going back to 1983 that a little known as the house, doctors said on Monday.

The recommendation comes as childhood poisonings have fallen sharply because new packaging makes medicines and other dangerous household products harder to open, the group said. —MNA/Xinhua

Victory declared in California blazes, firemen head home

LOS ANGELES, 4 Nov — Declaring victory over fires that ravaged many southern California mountain communities for the last 10 days, officials sent more than 2,000 weary firefighters home on Sunday, saying the blazes were all but extinguished.

The walk among fire-fighting and emergency management agencies turned from battling the wildfires that charred almost 750,000 acres and destroyed more than 3,400 homes to helping the victims with financial aid to rebuild their shattered lives.

Firefighters shared the credit for snuffing out the devastating fires with Mother Nature, who drenched the flames on Saturday with heavy rain and freezing temperatures—conditions that were due to continue for the next few days.

“The fire is out but our work is not done,” said Andrea Tuttle, director of the California Department of Forestry. “We don’t want to see any more hot flames anywhere.”

By noon (1700 GMT) on Sunday, 2,500 firefighters were on their way home to Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Oregon and North Carolina. About 14,500 firefighters were still manning the perimeters of four fires not fully contained. At one time 4,000 were on 12 massive wildfires—conditions that were due to continue for the next few days.

The still-active fires were between 70 per cent and 95 per cent contained and full containment is expected by Monday night.

Looking back on the disaster, Tuttle said: “The real story is the hundreds of thousands of homes of structures saved.” She added there were still some smoldering spots, but firecrews were cleaning those up. —MNA/Reuters

One dead, 35 injured in Colombia stadium accident

BOGOTA (Colombia), 4 Nov — A total of 1,050 kilos of cocaine worth 30 million US dollars was seized off the Caribbean coast during a joint operation by the Colombian, US, British and Dutch navies, said the Colombian Navy Sunday.

After spotting a big drug speedboat engaged in drug-trafficking, the four-nation naval forces began an immediate chase but were unable to capture the suspected crew who abandoned the boat on the shore of Cabo de la Vela Golf of La Guajira Province, North Colombia.

A British Naval ship discovered 42 packages of quality cocaine tossed away by the drug-traffickers during the chase. In addition, the Colombian Naval force along with the police are searching for the run-away traffickers along the Guajira coast.

Boostra (Colombia), 4 Nov — 20-year-old woman was killed and at least 35 others injured when a soccer stadium’s balcony railing gave way on Sunday in Colombia’s Caribbean city of Barranquilla, authorities said. Fans, some suffering serious head injuries, plummeted awkwardly onto a concrete stadium floor at least 12 feet below after crowding a metal balcony in post-game celebration. The aluminium railing broke under the pressure.

“It wasn’t that high. But it was a sharp fall and many fell badly. Since there weren’t many people below...they hit the concrete,” said Jose Estrada, director of rescue operations for the Red Cross in Barranquilla.

Television pictures showed one fan falling on his neck onto the stadium steps, another being taken away in a stretcher. Estrada said 16 of the victims had sustained serious injuries.

MNA/Reuters

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Looking back on the disaster, Tuttle said: “The real story is the hundreds of thousands of homes of structures saved.” She added there were still some smoldering spots, but firecrews were cleaning those up. —MNA/Reuters

Chinese telecommunications giant Datang has set up a joint venture to develop TD-SCDMA mobile phones in Jiangbei District in Chongqing, southwest China.

The developers are seeking cooperation with domestic and mobile phone producers and operators to commercialize the product.

The first group of the phones are expected to be available in 2005. The phone was made according to TD-SCDMA, the technological standard formulated by China and approved by the International Telecommunications Union of the United Nations as one of the three standards for 3-G mobile phones.

The other standards refer to WCDMA considered the future of mobile telecommunications, capable of providing such services as Internet webpage browsing, teleconferencing, and electronic commerce.

The phone was made according to TD-SCDMA, the technological standard formulated by China and approved by the International Telecommunications Union of the United Nations as one of the three standards for 3-G mobile phones.
Malaysia’s new PM to take finance portfolio

KUALA LUMPUR, 4 Nov — Malaysia’s new Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, will take over the post of finance minister on Monday, an aide said. His predecessor, Mahathir Mohamad, who retired as prime minister 42 years ago, will run the country for 22 years, also held the finance portfolio.

“He is taking over the duties of the Finance Minis- try from today,” one of the Prime Minister’s aides told Reuters.

The new Prime Minis- ter is also expected to make his debut as a leader in Parliament on Monday.

Abdullah, who is also Interior Minister, is ex- pected to appoint a new finance minister after elec- tions in early next year, when other Cabinet changes will be made, ac- cording to political sources close to the leadership.

But he could announce his choice of deputy prime minis- ter in December, after the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, and though he has given no hint, sources say Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak is favourite for the job. Najib’s late father, Abdul Razak, was Malay- sia’s second prime minis- ter from 1970 to 1976.

By convention, the deputy prime minister is one of the three vice- presidents of the national Organization (UMNO), which has led all of Malaysia’s multi-ethnic coalitions since independ- ence from Britain in 1957.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minis- ter Musthizyidn Yasin is be- lieved to be Najib’s main rival for the number two job.

Abdullah has retained Mahathir’s economic ad- viser, Nor Mohamed Yakcop, who has helped map out banking reform and debt restruc- turing and advised on the es- tablishment of the ringgit currency peg in the after- math of the Asian financial crisis in the late 1990s.

Shanghai Expo offers business opportunities for private enterprises

SHANGHAI, 4 Nov — The 2010 Shanghai World Expo will not only offer golden business opportunities for state-owned enterprises and foreign companies, but also for the country’s growing private sector.

Jing Shuping, chairman of the China Federation of Industry and Commerce, made the remark Sunday at the International Business Leader’s Advisory Council for the Mayor of Shanghai.

He said that after more than 20 years of development, China’s private enterprises have made great progress in assets accumulation, marketing, talent training, technology innovation and enterprise manage- ment, and have grown to be one of the country’s major economic driving forces.

Private enterprises not only play a leading role in labour- intensive industries and service industries, but also are developing well in some capital-intensive industries and technology-intensive industries, he said.

Jing suggested the Shanghai municipal government offer an open and fair competition environment for the private sector to participate in the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai.

China to train certified national trade logistics specialists

BEIJING, 4 Nov — China launched training courses on Saturday for 10,000 certified national logistics specialists in 2004, according to the Logistics Specialists National Qualification Certification Office.

More than 100 logistics experts and schol- ars from more than 50 universities and col- leges around the country were invited to give lectures for the training courses.

In accordance with “the national qualifi- cation standards for logistics specialists” promulgated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the country’s logistics pro- fessionals will be divided into three catego- ries, namely logistics assistant, logistics specialist and advanced logistics specialist.

Since China’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the country’s logistics business is expected to follow inter- national practice as soon as possible.

Logistics professionals have become popular in the country. It is estimated that in 2010, China will need 300,000 to 400,000 logistics professionals who are of junior college level or above.

Holbrooke slams Bush Administration on Turkey

WASHINGTON, 4 Nov — Richard Holbrooke, a veteran US diplomat widely seen as a likely secretary of state candidate if Democrat wins the 2004 election, on Monday slammed the Bush Administration’s handling of NATO ally Turkey and urged Ankara to withdraw its offer of troops for Iraq.

He said in two US diplomatic cables to the White House and foreign embassies, Ankara’s offer to deploy upwards of 10,000 troops to Iraq and for the prewar failure of Turkey’s Parliament to allow Iraqi-bound American troops to base on its territory.

Holbrooke’s speech to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy was part of an intensifying attack by out-of-power Demo- crats — those seeking the party’s presiden- tional nomination and former officials — on Republican President George W. Bush’s foreign policy in the run-up to the 2004 election.

US ties with Turkey were strained when Parliament last March rejected Washington’s request to allow the US Fourth Ar- moured Division to enter Iraq via Turkish land and sea routes.

Holbrooke said US officials and com- mentators were wrong to react furiously as though the vote, by an ally, was a betrayal of the course.

While the vote was a setback, he said the request failed because of a small number of abstentions, not because Turkish lawmakers were unanimously opposed.

US diplomacy after the vote “was less than brilliant. Had more senior US officials been engaged on this issue, I believe the margin of failure of only about four abstain- ing parliamentarians could have been over- turned,” he said.

India to export 100,000 cars to Britain

LONDON, 4 Nov — India is poised to export 100,000 cars to Britain in the next four years, with the first consignment of them slated to reach Birmingham any day.

“One in six of the cars, City Rover/Indica will help plug a market gap for Rover, which has no small car of its own to sell. But for Tata and for Indian manufacturing it is a giant leap forward,”

A car industry that was once the butt of jokes for still assembling the Ambassador, a copy of a 50-year-old Aus- tin, is now making modern cars without outside aid and — delicious irony — export- ing them to Britain, the report said. — MNA/PTI

Bangladesh, Sri Lanka to sign free trade pact

DHAKA, 4 Nov — Bangladesh and Sri Lanka agreed in principle to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) during their two-day meeting on FTA which concluded here Sunday.

Iyss Ahmed, who led the Bangladeshi delegation to the talks, told reporters after the meeting that both sides “agreed to go for a comprehensive agreement”.

The Commerce Ministry official said the talks basically dealt with the framework of the forthcoming FTA and fixed issues to be discussed during the next round of talks, which will be held in Colombo in January next year.

“It will be mutually beneficial,” he said, expressing hope for closer trade and economic relations between the two countries.

Sri Lanka’s three-member team was led by Director-General of the Department of Commerce Manel de Silva. — MNA/Xinhua

Vietnam’s agricultural, aquacultural exports to China surge

HANOI, 4 Nov — Vietnam’s agricultural and aquacultural exports to China are expected to grow by 400 million US dollars when China lowers import tariffs next year, accord- ing to a report of Vietnam Investment Review on Monday.

Of the sum, aquacultural products, and fruit and vegeta- ble will benefit most from the tariff reduction with an estimated increase of 200 million dollars, and 130 million dollars, respectively.

The new tariffs are part of the Early Harvest Programme agreed last year between China and the Association of the South-East Asian Nations.

Under the programme, import tariffs in China and Viet- nam on eight agricultural and aquacultural products will be reduced gradually to 20 per cent by 2004 and zero per cent by 2008 from the current rate of 40 per cent. — MNA/Xinhua

Export zones earn Bangladesh billions of US dollars

DHAKA, 4 Nov — Bangla- desh’s Export Processing Zones (EPZs) earned 1.20 billion US dollars from ex- ports during the 2002/2003 fiscal year, accounting for 19 per cent of the total ex- ports, the Bangladesh Export Pro- cessing Zones News Agency reported Sunday.

The earnings dur- ing the fiscal years 2000/ 2001 and 2001/2002 were 1.06 billion dollars and 1.07 billion dollars, respectively, accounting for 16 per cent and 18 per cent of the coun- try’s total national exports.

The average investment in the EPZs over the past 20 years was 31.70 million dollars.

The total investment rose to 637.28 million dol- lars in this year.

As many as 17,341 new jobs were created in the EPZs, up by 15.35 per cent over the last two years.

Business volume of China Int’l Tea Expo reaches 7.2m

HANGZHOU, 4 Nov — The four-day China International Tea Expo concluded here on Sunday with a turnover of business more than 60 million yuan (about 7.2 million US dollars). The volume of deals clinched on the spot ex- ceeded about 482,000 US dollars.

More than 1,500 busi- ness people from home and abroad, and about 130 dom- estic and overseas enter- prises, attended the ex- hibitions of 30 leading tea mar- kets around China flocked to the Expo at the Zhejiang World Trade Centre. The exhibition hall for the tea expo occupies an area of 5,500 square metres with 180 booths. A variety of China’s brand-name teas, tea sets and teapackages were displayed.

Two Iraqi Shi’ite tribesmen pass a British soldier from the 1st Battalion of the King’s Regiment, on patrol in Basra southern Iraq, on 2 November, 2003. Shi’ites, like all Muslims, are observing the holy fasting month of Ramadan. — INTERNET
Red Star stay top with 3-1 win over Obilic

BEGALEDGE, 4 Nov — Serbia and Montenegro league leaders Red Star Belgrade enjoyed a comfortable 3-1 win at Obilic on Sunday to stay three points clear of champions and bitter rivals Partizan Belgrade.

Belgrade’s big two teams clash in a potentially explosive derby on Saturday with Red Star in pole position on 25 points from 10 matches, ahead of Partizan and Sarid Smедеровко who have 22 each.

Striker Nikola Zuzic gave Red Star a 25th minute lead at Obilic with a spectacular goal after an excellent cross by midfielder Radovan Krivokapic.

Skipper Nemanja Matic made it 2-0 with a 53rd minute penalty and Dragan Mrđa sealed Red Star’s win in the 75th minute before Dejan Ilic grabbed a late consolation goal for the home team.

Struggling Vojvodina Novi Sad salvaged a point in a 2-2 home draw with cup holders Sarid Smедеровко thanks to an 85th minute effort from veteran striker Zdravko Drincic. All four goals were scored in an entertaining second half, Sarid’s Miroslav Spasic and Nenad Mirosavljevic cancelling a 47th minute opener by Voyvodina’s Branko Jelic.

Zoran Djuraskovic grabbed a brace in Zecmen Belgrade’s 4-2 win over city rivals Zemun to keep his team in the top five while OFK Belgrade stayed fourth with a hard-fought 1-0 home win over Hajduk Kula.

Champions Partizan slotted in a 3-0 home win over Zeta Golubovci on Sunday to stay three points clear of Red Star.

First division newcomers Buducnost Podgorica continued their fine run of events, and her two female assistants were placed to challenge for a UEFA Cup spot.

Brazil’s female referee in Criciuma red card storm

REDU JUNIOR, 4 Nov — Female referee Silvia Regina de Oliveira had to be escorted off the pitch after she sent off three Criciuma players in their 1-1 draw at Atlético Mineiro in the Brazilian championship at the weekend.

Oliveira, who has regularly taken charge of first division matches, made her debut earlier this season, infuriated the visitors more even by awarding an injury time penalty against them.

She also upsets Atlético, who claimed she did not add on enough injury time.

The 39-year-old, who last month also became the first women to take charge of a match in a South American club competition and, her two female assistants were given a police escort off the field at the end as players from both teams protested.

Criciuma took a 29th minute lead through Deijair but had midfielder Alexandre sent off for violent play six minutes later. Midfielder Alan and goalkeeper Fabiano were also dismissed for repeated time-wasting in the second half.

Grand finale brings curtains down on Afro-Asian Games

HYDERABAD, 4 Nov — The inaugural Afro-Asian Games was consigned to history at a glittering ceremony here Saturday night but not before marking the celebration of unity between the two continents and boosting India’s chances for hosting the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

The success of the Games also underlined the capability of India to host a mega event just as the inaugural Asian Games did in 1951.

The nine-day sporting extravaganza, which saw about 2,000 athletes from 95 countries competing for honours in eight disciplines, came to an end at the majestic GMC Balayogi Stadium with President A P J Abdul Kalam declaring the Games closed.

“I congratulate all the athletes and officials who were part of the Games. When I see thousands of sports persons I am sure the combined power of youth through sport will be the most powerful resource on earth,” Kalam said.

“I also congratulate the contingents particularly India and China, (who took the first two positions in the medal tally),” he said adding the experience gained from this event will enable the country to host much bigger events in future. The theme of “two continents—one spirit” was evident as the athletes joined hands to bid au revoir to this hi-tech city which brought them together from far and near.

The inter-continental meet might have lost some sheen with many of the competing nations failing to field their top athletes, yet it was a strong message to the world on India’s capabilities to host major international sport events.

Inter Milan beat Chievo Verona 2-0

MILA, 4 Nov — Inter Milan ended its five League games without a win with second half goals from Christian Vieri and Alvaro Recoba giving them a 2-0 win at Chievo Verona.

Inter coach Alberto Zaccheroni picked up his first victory since taking over from Cuper with his team moving up to seventh place.

Recoba struck the bar with a free-kick early on before Chievo’s former Lazio keeper Luca Marchegiani was harshly dismissed for a foul on Christian Vieri in the 15th minute.

19-year-old inspiration Carlos Tevez went off with a knee injury five minutes before halftime.

He now appears likely to miss next week’s match against arch-rivals River Plate.

Indipendente were helped by an excellent performance from 19-year-old goalkeeper Lucas Molina.

Newly-promoted Quilmes dropped from second to fifth after being sunk by an Ezeguel Gonzalez goal in the third minute of injury time.

Boca, who lost their unbeaten record in a 1-0 defeat at Newell’s Old Boys Wednesday, had another unhappy day as they drew with the Red Devils, who had lost their last five matches.

Boca’s frustration was compounded when

Porto widen lead, Benfica lose at new home

LISBON, 4 Nov — Benfica missed a chance to go second in the Portuguese Premier League after losing 2-1 at home to Beira Mar on Sunday, while champions Porto extended their lead at the top of the table.

In the first Premier League game at Benfica’s new Luz Stadium — which will stage next year’s European championship final — winger Simao Sabrosa put the home side ahead in the 40th minute when his shot from outside the area was deflected into Beira Mar’s net.

Beira Mar midfielder Sandro Silva levelled the score in the 53rd minute after a goalmouth scramble.

The visitors then surprised Benfica’s defence in the 64th minute with a counter-attack that led to Dutch striker Wijnaldum going unmarked inside the box and score to seal his team’s first win in 22 matches at Benfica.

Benfica, who slipped to fifth in the standings, lost the pitch to boos and whistles from disgruntled fans. Beira Mar moved up to third, equal on 19 points with second-placed Sporting.

Sporting, who tied 1-1 with Rio Ave at home on Saturday, have the advantage in the head-to-head result.

Porto, who host Olympique Marseille in the Champions League on Tuesday, beat Nacional Madeira 1-0 at home on Friday and lead the standings with 28 points from 10 matches.

Evandro Carlos gave Rio Ave the lead over Sporting on the brink of halftime, before Brazilian striker Elpidio Silva equalized with a glancing header for his first goal of the season in the 84th minute.

Barcelona’s Argentine player Javier Saviola, center, tries to dribble the ball between Real Sociedad’s Argentine player Gabriel Schurrer, right, and another unidentified player during the Spanish league soccer match in San Sebastian, Spain, on Sunday, 2 November, 2003. The match ended 3-3 draw.—MNA/PTI

MNA/Reuters
Prime Minister attends...

(from page 9) to Maung Kyaw Tun and Maung Than Win of Yangon Division and third prizes to Ma Sa San Pyone and U Zaw Nang Win of Mandalay Division.

Next, Ma Htet Htet Moe Lwin (a) Nai Ei Lwin, who won the prize for best dance performance (aged 5-10) presented a dance entertainment to the audience.

Member of the Panel of Patrons for Holding the Compenetration Chairman for Cooperation Maj-Gen Hay Htoo presented the first prize for professional level song composing to U Zaw Myaw of Kandawgyi Division, the second prize to U Aung Kyaw of Yangon Division and the third to U Soe Htun Khaing of Yangon Division and to MaungThan Haing (a) Zaw Lwin (from page 9). They were welcomed by officials and offertories to a Sayadaw.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents a gift to Bogalay U Tint Aung who contributed to the 11th Myanmarpyisein of Ayeyawady and the 12th Myanmarpyisein of Ayeyawady-who composed, the second to Ma Mu Su of Yango Division and the third to Maung Thein Bo Bo of Sagaing Division and to Maung Tun of Taninthayi Division, the first prize for higher education level song composing contest to Maung Aung Nai Ng Lay of Ayeyawady and the second to Ma Mu Su of Yango Division and the third to Maung Thein Bo Bo of Sagaing Division and to Maung Tun of Taninthayi Division, the first prize for higher education level song composing contest (aged 15-20) to Maung Aung Tun Kyaw of Yangon Division and the third to Maung Nyun Lin Tun of Mandalay Division, the first prize for basic education level boys’ harp contest (aged 10-15) to Maung Aung Koe Tun of Magway Division and the second to Maung Tun of Mandalay Division, the first prize for basic education level boys’ harp contest (aged 5-10) to Maung Thaing Tun of Magway Division, the second to Maung Tun of Mandalay Division and the third to Maung Nyin Tun of Taninthayi Division, the first prize for basic education level boys’ harp contest (aged 10-15) to Maung Aung Koe Tun of Magway Division and the third to Maung Tun of Mandalay Division, the first prize for basic education level boys’ xylophone contest (aged 10-15) to Maung Thura Kyi Moe (a) Po Thinyan of Yangon Division, the second to Maung Thein Bo Bo of Sagaing Division and the third to Maung Kyaw Tun and Maung Than Win of Yangon Division and the third to U Thaung Tin Htay of Mandalay Division.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt presents a gift to Bogalay U Tint Aung who contributed to the 11th Myanmarpyisein of Ayeyawady and the 12th Myanmarpyisein of Ayeyawady—...
Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Vice-Senior General Maung Aye bids farewell to Vice-President Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat

Yangon, 4 Nov — At the invitation of Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Vice-Senior General Maung Aye, the visiting Indian goodwill delegation led by Vice-President Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat left for Bagan-NyaungU by Special Aircraft this morning.

Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung, Deputy Ministers U Kyaw Win and U Kyaw Thu, Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet and Indian embassy staff at Yangon International Airport attended the departure of Vice-President Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat accompanied by Indian embassy staff at Yangon International Airport.

Vice-President Mr Bhairon Singh Shekhawat presented souvenirs to Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council of the Union of Myanmar Vice-Senior General Maung Aye on the latter's departure for Bagan-NyaungU by Special Aircraft at Yangon International Airport. — MNA

It is national duty for those who love and cherish lineage to preserve and safeguard own national characters

Prime Minister attends dinner in honour of maestros and judges of 11th MTCPAC

Yangon, 4 Nov — A dinner was hosted in honour of the maestros and judges who assisted the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions at the National Theater on Myoma Kyuang Street this evening attended by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt.

Also present on the occasion were Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Li-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Li-Gen Thein Sein, member of Panel of Patrons of the Committee and members of working committee and sub-committees, the directors-general of SPDC office, departmental heads, maestros, judges, managers from states and divisions and guests.

U Hla Win and Daw Thida Swe of Myanmar Radio and Television acted as masters of ceremonies.

The Prime Minister said the 11th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions successfully concluded in accord with fine traditions. He said the government thanked the maestros for their contribution to bring about valuable results and their active leadership and participation in the competitions and honoured them.

He said national cultural traditions and customs, national way of thinking, national norms and social values and national cultural arts (See page 7)