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

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

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

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye bids farewell to Supreme Commander of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Somdhat Attanand before his departure for Thailand.— MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye sees off Supreme Commander of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Somdhat Attanand and Madame Khunying Suppanapa Attanand and party, who had completed their goodwill tour, at Yangon International Airport this morning.

Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence and wife Daw Khin Lay Thet, Members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Rear-Admiral Soe Thein, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein and their wives, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife, Vice-Chief of Military Intelligence Maj-Gen Kyaw Win, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, Thai Ambassador Mr Suphot Dhirakaosal, Thai Military Attaché Col Kasam Nakpun and officials also saw off the Thai Supreme Commander and wife and party.

At 8 am, the Thai Supreme Commander and wife and party arrived at the airport. Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San cordially greeted the guests at the VIP Lounge.

Next, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye presented a photo album and video tapes on the goodwill visit to the Thai General.

When the special aircraft of Royal Thai Army carrying the Thai Supreme Commander and wife and party took off, Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San and party waved to the guests.— MNA

Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San see off Thai Supreme Commander and wife and party

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

Sunday, 12 September, 2004

Boost production and export of oil and gas

The Union of Myanmar is rich in terrestrial and marine resources, and natural gas, an energy resource, can be exploited on a commercial scale not only in its interior regions but also off the coasts.

The Government has been making concerted endeavours for strengthening the State’s economy by fulfilling local demand of oil and gas and exporting the surplus.

With respect to the oil and gas sector, the State is expanding the scope of exploration of oil and natural gas through its own investment and technology as well as mutual-interest-based cooperation with foreign companies at Mottama, Taninthayi and Rakhine offshore oil and gas blocks in addition to those in interior regions.

Recently, large gas deposits have been discovered at Rakhine Offshore Block Nos A-1 and A-3. Now, new oil wells have been drilled successfully at Yedagun Offshore Oil and Gas Field in Taninthayi Division, producing crude oil and natural gas.

Plans are well under way to increase export of natural gas to Thailand and to pipe the condensate, a by-product of the project, to Thanlyin Oil Refinery, and these plans will make significant contributions towards serving the interest of the State.

Yedagun Offshore Oil and Natural Gas Field was set up at No 1 Test Well in November 1992 and 12 more wells were drilled. These new wells produce 145 million cubic-feet of natural gas a day.

In response to the growing natural gas demand of Thailand, efforts are being made with added momentum to boost production of oil and natural gas at Yedagun Offshore Oil and Natural Gas Project. As a result, four new wells have been drilled successfully at the end of August 2004. So far, total output of the project has reached 500 million cubic-feet a day. Therefore, the natural gas export to Thailand is going to be increased to 400 million cubic-feet per day.

Thanks to successful implementation of such oil and natural gas projects, supply is exceeding the local demand and more foreign currency can be earned by means of exporting the surplus.

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

Delegates to Workshop for ASEAN Cultural Interaction at Grassroots served with dinner

YANGON, 11 Sept—Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung delivered an address at the dinner hosted by Chairman of ASEAN-COCI National Committee Director-General U Myint Thein Swe of the Department of Cultural Institute to delegates who attended the Workshop for People Exchange Programme ASEAN Cultural Interaction at Grassroots, Phase III held in Manda-

It was also attended by Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, Adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Retired Ambassador U Win Lwin, Departmental Heads and Officials of Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the delegates of ASEAN countries and partner the People’s Republic of China and guests. Next, Minister Maj-Gen Kyi Aung delivered an address and presented souvenirs to the delegates.

Afterwards, those present were served with dinner. During the dinner, artists entertained dances and songs to the audience. Next, the leader of the Cambodian delegation presented a flower basket to the artists.

Later, those present and artistes sang the song titled ‘ASEAN Song of Unity’ in chorus.

Minister Maj-Gen Kyi Aung delivers an address at the dinner. —MNA

Minister for Mines leaves for Thailand

YANGON, 11 Sept—The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint, left here by air this morning to attend the Bangkok Gems and Jewellery Emporium 2004 to be held in Bangkok, Thailand.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin, Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, Deputy Minister for Mines U Myint Thein, Thai Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Supholt Dhirakaosal, heads of the department, officials and their families.

The minister was accompanied by Managing Director of No 2 Mining Enterprise U Hla Thein and Director of Myanmar Gems Enterprise U Thein Swe.

Myanmar delegation led by Chief Justice leaves for Cambodia

YANGON, 11 Sept—The Myanmar delegation led by Chief Justice U Aung Toe left for Phnom Penh by air this morning to attend the 25th General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) to be held in Cambodia from 12 to 17 September.

The delegation was seen off at Yangon International Airport by Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Auditor-General Maj-Gen Lun Maung, Deputy Chief Justice U Thein Soe, Deputy Attorney-General U Myint Naing, Supreme Court Judge U Khin Maung Aye, Cambodian Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Hul Phany, Director-General of the Supreme Court U Soe Nyunt and officials of the Supreme Court and Attorney-General’s Office.

Chief Justice U Aung Toe was accompanied by Legal Adviser U Thaung Nyunt and Deputy Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin. —MNA

H&T Minister receives Thai guests

YANGON, 11 Sept—Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw received the Thai delegation led by Mr Suparek Sooran Gura, President of Association of Thai Travel Agents (ATTA) at the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism this morning. During their meeting they discussed matters related to promotion and cooperation in tourism sector between the two countries.

Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu and officials.

Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint presents championship shield to Ayeyawady Division (B) in 10th Inter-State/Division Sepak Takraw Tournament on 10-9-2004.—MNA

UMFCCI President U Win Myint sees off Vice-President U Win Aung and party before their departure for Thailand. (News reported)—UMFCCI

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Costa Rica quits Iraq war coalition

SAN JOSÉ, 11 Sept — Costa Rican Foreign Minister Roberto Tovar on Thursday requested the United States to remove his country’s name from the list of nations backing the occupation coalition in Iraq.

This petition was presented in a diplomatic note addressed to US Secretary of State Colin Powell in compliance with the resolution of Costa Rica’s constitutional tribunal, which was issued on Wednesday.

In the diplomatic note, Tovar said Costa Rica, respectful of the rule of law and the independence of the branches of the state, abides by the decision of the high constitutional tribunal.

“As a consequence, my government requests the government of the United States to exclude the name of the Republic of Costa Rica from the list of allies in the Coalition or Alliance,” said the diplomatic note, which has been presented to the US Embassy in San José.

The constitutional court, the top judicial body of Costa Rica, unanimously declared Wednesday night as unconstitutional the moral support given by Costa Rica to the United States in its invasion of Iraq, and ordered the government to remove the name of the Central American country from the list of the coalition.

The decision of the court also stressed that the act “went against the Constitution, the Principle of Perpetual, Active and Non-Armed Neutrality (of Costa Rica), the International Law, and the United Nations System.”

Nonetheless, the Foreign Minister reiterated that the Costa Rican Government never declared war to Iraq or supported the invasion of Iraq.

In previous occasions, President Abel Pacheco and Foreign Minister Tovar had indicated that Costa Rica’s support was not for the invasion of Iraq, but for the combat, headed by the United States, against international terrorism.

In an interim report in October last year, its chief David Kay reiterated his position when he resigned three months later.

The Guardian said that the release of definitive conclusions in the next two weeks would put British Prime Minister Tony Blair in an awkward position, just as his governing Labour Party holds its annual conference.

In a front-page report, it said that Kay’s report has revealed that the team — charged with finding proof of Saddam’s quest for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons — will deliver its report “in two weeks’ time.”

“It will draw the final conclusion that there are no WMD in the country, although the threat of Saddam’s war is real,” said the Guardian, which did not identify its sources.

The Iraq Survey Group, comprising more than 1,000 mainly US intelligence and weapons experts, fanned out across Iraq in July 2003, four months after the US-led invasion that toppled Saddam.

In an interim report in October last year, its chief David Kay told the US Senate it had yet to find stocks of WMD, but added that it was not at a point where it could say definitely that such weapons did not exist.

Kay reiterated his position when he resigned three months later.

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To a greater extent than US President George W Bush, Blair sought to justify taking Britain into the Iraq war by citing the threat of Iraqi WMD and the danger they might fall into terrorist hands.

In July, a British inquiry into pre-war intelligence said Iraq — which under Saddam defied a string of UN resolutions on WMD — most likely possessed no useable weapons of mass destruction before the March 2003 invasion.

The door of a shop is pockmarked with machinegun bullets after an US offensive in Sadr City, Baghdad, on 10 Sept, 2004.

Local residents assess damage caused to business establishments after an US offensive in Sadr City, Baghdad, on 10 Sept, 2004.

Schroeder defends stance on Iraq War

BERLIN, 10 Sept— Chancelor Gerhard Schroeder reassured Germany’s right to disagree with the United States over Iraq, adding that it would be wrong to interpret his country’s opposition to the war as anti-Americanism.

His comments came at an event marking 10 years since US, British and French troops leftreunited Berlin at the end of the Cold War, a departure that stood for the return of Germany’s sovereignty and the end of five decades of Allied tutelage after World War II.

Schroeder paid tribute to the protection that Allied troops gave to West Berlin and West Germany, the influence of American culture and democratic ideals on post-Nazi society, and what he portrayed as a spirit of optimism in the United States that Germany could learn from today.

But he defended his decision to side with France and Russia in opposing last year’s US-led invasion of Iraq, which chilled his relationship with President Bush for months.

“ar has clearly been to possible to ask critical questions about a decision, or even reject it, without immediately being put under, as it were, a blanket suspicion,” Schroeder said Thursday to an audience that included prominent German and US diplomats and business leaders.

Polls have generally shown that majorities in European countries, including Germany, reject the US policy in Iraq.

But Schroeder argued, cultural and business ties, along with shared values such as opposing terrorism, still make for strong bonds.

“My ask you to respect is this: Not to describe every divergent opinion as anti-Americanism,” he said.

Schroeder spoke at the 10th anniversary of the American Academy, a Berlin institute that promotes US-German academic and cultural exchanges and is housed in a former US military recreation center.

1,008 members of the US military killed since beginning of military operations in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 10 Sept—As of Friday, Sept. 10, 1,008 members of the US military have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq in March 2003, according to the Defence Department. Of those, 762 died as a result of hostile action and 246 died of non-hostile causes. The figures include three military civilians.

The British military has reported 64 deaths; Italy, 18; Spain, 11; Poland, 10; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, six; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; and Denmark, El Salvador, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and the Netherlands have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 867 US military members have died — 650 as a result of hostile action and 217 of non-hostile causes, according to the military’s numbers.

UNSG “extremely” concerned about hostages in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 10 Sept — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan on Wednesday he is “extremely” concerned about the fate of all civilians held hostage in Iraq and repeated his call for their immediate and unconditional release.

“The abductions of two French journalists and two Italian humanitarian aid workers and their Iraqi colleagues are but the latest incidents in a tragic pattern of violations committed against innocent civilians in Iraq,” Annan said in a statement issued through his spokesman.

Two female Italian aid workers were seized from their offices in central Baghdad on Tuesday after an attack by a group of armed men. Two Iraqis, a man and a woman, were also kidnapped in the raid. — MNA/Xinhua

Iraq Survey Group to report within two weeks

LONDON, 10 Sept— The Iraq Survey Group is to confirm during the next fortnight that Saddam Hussein’s regime had no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction when it was invaded last year, the Guardian newspaper said.

In a front-page report, it said that Kay has revealed that the team — charged with finding proof of Saddam’s quest for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons — will deliver its report “in two weeks’ time.”

“It will draw the final conclusion that there are no WMD in the country, although the threat of Saddam’s war is real,” said the Guardian, which did not identify its sources.

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The door of a shop is pockmarked with machinegun bullets after an US offensive in Sadr City, Baghdad, on 10 Sept, 2004.
Armored groups begin to control more areas in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 10 Sept — Armed groups and foreign terrorists have established new camps in central Iraq as government forces attack rebels in the north and south, officials say.

The reports follow an admission by US central command chief Gen John Abizaid that there are more areas in Iraq under rebel control today than there were last year.

The revelations could be damning for the government of US appointed interim prime minister Iyad Allawi who has promised to uproot armed opposition to the nascent government.

New camps have been reported in the ‘Sunni triangle’ zone that includes Falluja and Ramadi. Iraqis and western sources say the camps have been established recently and fortified in the past couple of months.

Reports are coming in of new armed groups organizing themselves in parts of the country earlier thought safe, as fighting escalates in other parts of Iraq. Over the past few days fighting has erupted again in many parts of the country including Falluja and Mosul in the north and Sadr City in Baghdad.

US forces have said they targeted houses used by followers of Abu Musab Zargawi, the Jordanian-Palestinian believed to the al-Qaeda leader in Iraq.

US warplanes have also attacked Tal Afar near Mosul in the north in an attempt to smash arms smuggling. Local medical sources say at least 27 people were killed and 70 wounded. US military officials said they believed 57 insurgents had died.

US troops also entered the central city Samarra Thursday for the first time in weeks in an attempt to establish local government and force militiamen out.

“They are mostly Baathist groups, but there are some foreign terrorists as well,” Ahmed Chalabi, leader of the Iraqi National Congress says, referring to the Baath Party that ruled Iraq under Saddam Hussein. “They have sophisticated military organisation, are well trained, well armed, and have lots of money.”

His assertion is backed by other Iraqi politicians with close connections among the people.

“There are terrorist camps. They have stored lots of arms and ammunition. They have equipment for forging documents and passports,” says Ismail Zayer, editor-in-chief of the independent daily Sahab al-Jedid. “They have positioned themselves to have contacts with people in places like Ramadi and Falluja, as well as with people in the south.”

The groups are said to have established some military camps in Mahmoudiyeh-Latifiyeh-Yousefiye along the Baghdad-Najaf highway. Many foreign journalists and aid workers have been kidnapped in this area. Convoys of Iraqi officials have been attacked.

The number of armed militiamen is not known. Most Iraqi sources speak of hundreds; some say it could be close to a thousand. — Internet

Former enemies say Iraq fuelling America’s Vietnam War obsession

HANOI, 10 Sept — America’s increasingly drawn-out campaign in Iraq is the reason the Vietnam War remains such a contentious issue in the US presidential election race, retired Vietnamese generals say.

The elderly officials interviewed by AFP said they were not surprised the war, which left more than 58,000 Americans dead, had become a key battleground between President George W. Bush and his Democratic challenger John Kerry.

“Americans, rich and powerful, have still not come to terms with their defeat at the hands of smaller, poorer people,” said General Hoang Minh Thao, a respected historian of the Vietnamese army.

For many here, the Vietnam War quagmire has resonance today in Iraq, where the US military death toll this week passed the grim milestone of 1,000. “The lessons of the (Vietnam) war still have value” to the agreements between the two countries to continue contacts at high levels.

“In June, US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld compared the violence facing US forces in Iraq with the Tet Offensive of 1968 in which communist forces mounted a series of daring attacks against US forces across South Vietnam that highlighted the hollowness of Washington’s claims it was winning the war.”

As the case in Vietnam, they predicted that the US military would face heavy losses as they became drawn into a guerrilla conflict without the support of the population.

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Russia welcomes outcome of Indo-Pakistani talks

MOSCOW, 10 Sept — Russia on Thursday described the outcome of talks between the Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan as an “important step” in development of a bilateral composite dialogue and said it attached “high value” to the agreements between the two countries to continue contacts at high levels.

“We highly value the agreements to continue contacts at the summit and high levels, particularly about the meeting of the Prime Minister of India and President of Pakistan in September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly,” a Russian Foreign Ministry statement said while welcoming the outcome of the just-concluded talks between External Affairs Minister K Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid M Kasuri.

It noted the readiness of both the sides for “frank and non-confrontational” discussions on the outstanding issues in their bilateral relations and expressed “optimism” at the plans for regular contacts between the border authorities and on nuclear CBMs at experts’ level.

“We view the talks as an important step in the development of dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad poised at resolving the whole complex of bilateral issues in spirit of Simla Accord and on the basis of the UN Charter,” the Russian statement said.

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US airstrike killed at least five Iraqi civilians including children

FALLUJAH (Iraq), 10 Sept — US airstrike killed at least five Iraqi civilians in the town of Fallujah overnight, doctors and witnesses said on Thursday.

Dr Mushak Talib said three men and two women were killed, members of three families. Another doctor said at least 14 people were wounded, among them children under the age of four. Two children were said to be in critical condition.

Witnesses said two houses were destroyed in the strikes, which were launched at around 2 am (2200 GMT). It was the third successive night of air-strikes on the town.

US Marines have been fighting guerrillas for three consecutive days in the town west of Baghdad, a centre of resistance to US troops which is controlled by guerrillas.

A US military statement said multinational forces had carried out a “precision strike” on a site used by supporters of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant who the Americans say is a key al-Qaeda operative.

He is the United States’ most wanted man in Iraq, accused of masterminding major attacks including suicide bombings.

“The target was a building frequently used by terrorists,” the statement said. “Three Zarqawi associates were reported to be in the area, no other individuals were present at the time of the strike.”

The US military has launched several air-strikes on buildings in Fallujah, and in one case a truck lot, which it linked to Zarqawi. On each occasion Fallujah residents said civilians were killed and that Zarqawi was not in the area.

Bloodied children lay on hospital beds after Wednesday night’s attack and residents with flash-lights searched for more victims in the rubble.

17 killed in heavy clashes in northern Iraq

BAGHDAD, 10 Sept — Seventeen people were killed and some 50 others wounded in heavy clashes overnight between US and Iraqi forces and guerrillas in Iraq’s northern town of Tal Afar, witnesses and medical sources said on Thursday.

The clashes erupted at 2:00 am (2200 GMT Wednesday) and continued for several hours as US and Iraqi forces launched a fresh offensive against the town, in a bid to force the guerrillas out of the area, witnesses said.

“Multi-National Forces and Iraqi security forces initiated operations to restore control of Tal Afar to legitimate Iraqi government officials,” the US military said in a statement.

Tal Afar, some 390 kilometres north of Baghdad, has witnessed fierce fighting between coalition forces and guerrillas during the past few days.

On 4 September, clashes between US forces and guerrillas erupted in Tal Afar as US tanks rushed into the town, intending to conduct searches in the area.

Thirteen Iraqis were killed and more than 50 others wounded in the fighting, medics said.

A US military helicopter was also forced to land near the fighting scene, a US military spokesman said, adding that two aboard the aircraft were injured.

Meanwhile, 12 Iraqis were killed and nine others wounded in an overnight US air raid on the Iraqi flashpoint city of Fallujah.

It was the third successive overnight air raid on the city. The US military said in a statement that multinational forces had carried out a “precision strike” on a site allegedly used by supporters of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. — MNA/Xinhua

Most Britons lose trust in ministers

LONDON, 10 Sept — Most Britons have lost trust in British ministers to tell the truth since the war on Iraq, the British The Guardian newspaper quoted a latest detailed survey as reporting on Thursday.

The survey, which questioned 1,000 people, found that 60 per cent of the British people had lost trust in ministers since Prime Minister Tony Blair joined the US-led war against Iraq in March last year.

Forty-two per cent were swayed by the revelations over the handling of the war by the Hutton inquiry and about 23 per cent cited the “dodgy dossier”, with its false claims that former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein could launch an attack with weapons of mass destruction within 45 minutes, the poll showed.

The poll, commissioned by the anti-sleaze watchdog, the committee on standards in public life, found that 70 per cent of those interviewed did not trust ministers to tell the truth, while 24 per cent believed what they said.

Lawmakers fared little better, the poll revealed, with about 65 per cent of those polled believing that they were untrustworthy and 27 per cent thinking they were generally honest. The survey also showed that ministers and lawmakers were believed to be less trustworthy than television news journalists, doctors, police officers, judges, as well as journalists on the British newspapers The Guardian, The Times and The Daily Telegraph.

British tourist killed in delta plane crash

ANKARA, 10 Sept — A British tourist was killed when a delta plane they were taking crashed in the Aegean city of Fethiye in Turkey on Thursday, semi-official Anatolia news agency reported.

The crash occurred on the rocks shortly after it took off because of reverse air current, said the report.

British national Michael Wackrow, who was with the plane for a parachute jump, lost his life on the way to hospital and Turkish pilot Mehmet Karaca is under medical treatment in the same hospital, added the report. — MNA/Xinhua

France voices solidarity with Italy over hostage-taking in Iraq

PARIS, 10 Sept — France voiced solidarity with Italy after the kidnapping of two Italians working for an NGO, French Foreign Ministry said Wednesday.

“France learnt with a strong emotion the kidnapping of Simona Torretta and Simona Pari who work for a humanitarian organization,” declared Herve Ladous, spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry.

“(France) wants to voice its solidarity with Italy as well as their families in this trial,” he added. The two female Italian aid workers and two Iraqis were seized by gunmen from their central Baghdad office on Tuesday afternoon.

Since the US-led war on Iraq in March 2003, more than 100 foreigners have been abducted by guerrillas.

Two French journalists, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, were kidnapped on 20 August with their Syrian driver Mohamed al-Jounidi, by a group called itself Islamic Army of Iraq. — MNA/Xinhua

Annan for “immediate and unconditional” release of hostages

UNITED NATIONS, 10 Sept — Concerned over increasing reports of hostage-taking in Iraq, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked for “immediate and unconditional” release of all those abducted in Iraq.

“The Secretary-General is extremely concerned about the fate of all civilians held hostage,” his spokesman, Fred Eckhard, told reporters on Wednesday.

“The abductions of two French journalists and two Italian humanitarian aid workers and their Iraqi colleagues are but the latest incidents in a tragic pattern of violations committed against innocent civilians in Iraq,” he said. — MNA/PTI

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“France learnt with a strong emotion the kidnapping of Simona Torretta and Simona Pari who work for a humanitarian organization,” declared Herve Ladous, spokesman of the French Foreign Ministry.

“(France) wants to voice its solidarity with Italy as well as their families in this trial,” he added. The two female Italian aid workers and two Iraqis were seized by gunmen from their central Baghdad office on Tuesday afternoon.

Since the US-led war on Iraq in March 2003, more than 100 foreigners have been abducted by guerrillas. Two French journalists, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbrunot, were kidnapped on 20 August with their Syrian driver Mohamed al-Jounidi, by a group called itself Islamic Army of Iraq. — MNA/Xinhua
**Thailand to hold ASEAN meeting on bird flu vaccination**

**BANGKOK, 10 Sept** — Thailand will host an ASEAN meeting on November to discuss the use of vaccination in face of uneased avian influenza outbreak, local Press reported on Thursday.

The meeting, to be held on 25-26, November is expected to bring together public health ministers and related officials from the 10 ASEAN member nations and China, Japan and South Korea, said the state-run Thai News Agency (TNA).

The use of vaccination against bird flu spreading through the region would be the key topic of the ministers and officials, Thai Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan was quoted as saying.

Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia were hard hit by the foul epidemic in the beginning of this year and 24 people in the region died in the first wave of outbreak.

The latest report showed that one more person died of the disease in Vietnam last week and Malaysia was also hit by the epidemic.

While the countries are still haunted by the disease, whether to use vaccination to curb the spread has become a controversial issue.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization Office to Asia and the Pacific earlier said it is the top task for countries threatened with bird flu outbreak to prevent further spread of the disease by culling poultry or injecting vaccine.

However, many poultry importing countries have declared ban on products injected with vaccine for fear of harmful residues.

Thailand has banned the use of vaccine while the disease is still monitored in 14 provinces.

Doctors try to revive baby Abdul Khalil after he sustained fatal injuries during an air raid in Fallujah, Iraq on 9 Sept, 2004. Dr Ahmad Thair of the Fallujah General Hospital said five people were killed, including two women and a child, and nine others injured in the strike. —INTERNET

**Double-lane Dhaka-Chittagong Highway attracts investment**

**DHAKA, 10 Sept** — The construction work of Bangladeshi double-lane Dhaka-Chittagong express highway, which is going on in full swing for completion in scheduled time, will help attracting more foreign investment and increasing export earnings.

The road would facilitate smooth and quick transportation between the capital and the port city as well as link with the proposed Asian Highway, according to The New Nation Thursday.

Sources of the Roads and Highways Department said that the construction work is being financed by the Asian Development Bank. The project comprises of two components — Corridor Improvement Component (CIC) and Road Maintenance Component (RMC).

Under the CIC to be implemented at a cost of 3.657 billion taka (61 million US dollars), a 113-kilometre double-lane would be constructed.

The second phase of development of the highway would begin under RMC on completion of CIC which is scheduled to be completed by June 2006. Under the RMC, maintenance work of some 111-kilometre road would be completed at a cost of around 1.94 billion taka (32 million dollars).

The express highway reportedly would bring about “a revolutionary change” in the national economy as it would also link Dhaka-Chittagong Highway with the proposed Trans-Asian Highway at Teknaf, bordering Myanmar.

It would be in line with the present government’s “look-east” policy for boosting the country’s economic growth, ADB said.

The project supports the Chinese Government’s strategy to develop the country’s western region by supplying a vital section of the Changsha-Chongqing corridor — one of eight prioritized western corridors in the 10th Five Year Plan, the ADB said in a statement.

The project will construct a 173-kilometre, four-lane toll expressway from Changudd to Huaihua, and upgrade 517 kilometres of local roads servicing 404 poor villages. It will also provide consulting services and training to enhance construction quality, road safety, and project monitoring and evaluation, the ADB said.

The development of the road network in western Hunan will help transform the benefits of the eastern region’s economic growth to the poor western region. Some 1.9 million people, or 68 percent of the total population in the project area, will directly benefit from the project. Around 42 percent of these are from ethnic minorities.

The project area is largely rural and mountainous, and road infrastructure is inadequate to support economic growth, a necessary prerequisite to tackle poverty in the area.

Not only will transport providers, such as bus and truck operators, benefit, but also passengers and traders who will enjoy speedier, more comfortable, and improved road safety, the statement added.

**Bangkok slum drug boss sentenced to life imprisonment**

**BANGKOK, 11 Sept** — A slum drug boss in Bangkok was sentenced to life imprisonment on Thursday for drug trafficking on circumstantial evidence, local Press reported on Friday.

Supap Sidaeng, 34, also known as Sayam Sapworasith, was found guilty of methamphetamine trafficking and violating drug laws. Supap, a well-known underworld leader in the Bangkok downtown slum community of Klong Toei, was sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiring with Suchart Pornthachote, sentenced earlier to 33 years and four months in jail for selling drugs. The prosecution said Supap, also known as "Pup ‘70 ra", conspired with Suchart and various other suspects to sell 12,000 speed pills to a customer in January 1998. He sent the drugs to Suchart to sell to drug dealer Udon Mahangkhu, who was arrested and convicted by the Southern Bangkok Criminal Court. — MNA/Xinhua

**Indian aviation to allow private carriers to fly to ASEAN**

**NEW DELHI, 10 Sept** — The Indian Civil Aviation Ministry is soon going to move the Federal Cabinet on the proposal to allow private domestic carriers, now operating to SAARC countries, to fly to ASEAN nations.

The Ministry is considering granting air services rights to these private carriers on the basis of certain formulae, including their domestic route network, the number of destinations they are operating and economically unviable but strategically important sectors such as the northeast, official sources told PTI here.

Indian Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel is likely to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh next week to discuss certain issues, including allowing private domestic carriers to fly to the ten South-East Asian nations. The matter may come up at the Cabinet meeting this month-end.

Asked about the number of flights Indian carriers, including the private ones, would be allowed to operate to ASEAN, they said the Ministry could consider the domestic route dispersal of all Indian carriers.

The sources said the Civil Aviation Ministry would seek “in-principle” approval of the Cabinet to its proposal to allow private carriers to operate to ASEAN nations including most sought after destinations like Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok. — MNA/PTI

**ADB approves loan to develop road network in south China**

**MANILA, 10 Sept** — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday approved a 312.5 million US-dollar loan to develop the road network in the western part of Hunan Province, south China.

The project supports the Chinese Government’s strategy to develop the country’s western region by supplying a vital section of the Changsha-Chongqing corridor — one of eight prioritized western corridors in the 10th Five Year Plan, the ADB said in a statement.

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**A Filipino worker weighs a sashimi grade yellowfin tuna being auctioned at the fish port complex in General Santos City, southern Philippines on 10 Sept, 2004. — INTERNET**
Better transport helps strengthen national unity

_Lapin Bridge in Kalaywa Township, Sagaing Division._ — MNA.

_Sanepauk Bridge on Yangon-Kyaukpyu Road in An Township, Rakhine State._

_Langkho Bridge, 290 feet long and 24 feet wide, in Daseik, Langkho Township, Shan State (South)._
Minister inspects trial run of CNG motor vehicles

YANGON, 11 Sept — Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin yesterday evening arrived at No 1 Automobile Factory (Yangon) of Myanmar Automobile and Diesel Engine Industries and inspected a test run of compressed natural gas vehicles that have been converted from the ones with diesel engines.

At the factory, the minister first inspected machines parts assembled by No 1 Automobile Factory and other automobile factories to be used in manufacturing the CNG vehicles. MADEI Managing Director U Soe Thein and Factory General Manager U Hlaing Thein conducted the minister round the factory.

Next, the minister inspected the test run of a CNG TE truck and the CNG buses of the Ministry of Rail Transportation and the Ministry of Industry-2 and gave necessary instructions to officials.

So far, No 1 Automobile Factory (Yangon) has assembled four CNG TE trucks and two CNG buses.

On page 1 — MNA

Commander addresses ceremony to mark Yangon Division World First Aid Day

YANGON, 11 Sept — The ceremony to mark the Yangon Division World First Aid Day for 2004 was held at the Institute of Nursing on Bogyoke Aung San Street here at 11 am today, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife Patron of Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Daw Khin Thet Htay.

Also present on the occasion were military region commanders and their wives, Secretary of Yangon Division PDC Lt-Col Myint Kyi and members, CEC members of Myanmar Red Cross Society, members of Panel of Patrons of Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee, Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint, the Chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils, social organizations, members of Yangon Division Red Cross Supervisory Committee, outstanding Red Cross members and guests.

In his address, Maj-Gen Myint Swe said that the first aid means to give a helpful hand to those hurting suddenly not only to alleviate pain but to save life before they received medical treatment at a clinic or hospital.

He called on Red Cross members to make earnest efforts for successful realization of the three tasks of Red Cross Society—to boost the health, to prevent the disease and to help those who are in trouble—as the society is based on humanitarian affairs.

Next, Chairman of Yangon Division Red Cross Supervisory Committee Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint presented the championship flag for competitions to mark the World First Aid Day and Secretary Dr Aung Win the championship shields for competitions to mark the World First Aid Day to Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

This was followed by the prize-presentation ceremony.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe presented prizes and certificates of honour to outstanding Red Cross members. Patron of Yangon Division Maternal and Child Welfare Supervisory Committee Daw Khin Thet Htay presented prizes to townships that are outstanding in organisational tasks.

After that, member of Yangon Division PDC Yangon Division Commissioner U Hla Soe presented prizes to outstanding Red Cross members.

Next, Head of Yangon Division Health Department Dr Hla Myint presented prizes to Red Cross members who won prizes in the first aid competitions held in commemoration of the Yangon Division World First Aid Day for 2004, after which the ceremony came to an end.—MNA
Construction of Parami Overpass …

(from page 16)

renovation of the airport building and extension of the runway presented by Managing Director U Tun Myint Naing of Asia World Co Ltd.

After leaving necessary instructions, the General inspected driving of bored piles, laying of concrete on the floor and extension of the apron.

Next, the Prime Minister saw over the lounge of the airport and renovation and decoration of the halls at the airport building. Furthermore, the General inspected preparations for building the new warehouse and gave instructions.

On arrival at the site of Parami Overpass Project being implemented by Myanma Railways of the Ministry of Rail Transportation, Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation Thura U Thaung Lwin and officials welcomed the Prime Minister and party and conducted them round the project site.

After giving necessary instructions, the Prime Minister left the construction site in the morning.

Parami Overpass is located at the junction of Parami Road and the circular railroad between Kaba Aye Pagoda Road and Waizayanda Road. It will be 1,175 feet long and 48 feet wide four-lane overpass. The pedestrian ways will be four feet wide on both sides of the overpass which will be 14 feet high. As construction tasks were completed cent per cent, it will be opened soon. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Chairman Dr P Krishnan Raju and Director Professor Dr Arun Tiwari of Care Foundation of India at Zeyathiri Beikman. (News on page-16) — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects completion of Parami Overpass being built by Myanma Railways. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Chairman Dr P Krishnan Raju and Director Professor Dr Arun Tiwari of Care Foundation of India at Zeyathiri Beikman. (News on page-16) — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects completion of Parami Overpass being built by Myanma Railways. — MNA

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspects completion of Parami Overpass being built by Myanma Railways. — MNA

NCCC, Work Committee …

(from page 16)

forthcoming National Convention; that steps are to be taken for growing trees and flowery plants at Nyaunghnnapin Camp where the National Convention will resume, and for timely completion of construction and renovation measures.

Lt-Gen Thein Sein called on officials concerned to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for success of the forthcoming National Convention like the one that was successfully held.

Afterwards, Vice-Chairman of National Convention Convening Work Committee Attorney-General U Aye Maung reported on arrangements being made for matters to be presented by the Work Committee at the National Convention when it resumes.

Next, those present dealt with matters related to laying down of detailed basic principles to be included in the drafting of the State constitution to be adopted at the National Convention and to successful holding of the National Convention.

The meeting ended at 4 pm. — MNA

NCCC Chairman Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein addresses coordination meeting of National Convention Convening Commission. — MNA

NCCC, Work Committee, the Panel of Chairmen have already completed tasks to be carried out regarding the National Convention

Work is being carried out for matters to be discussed by the commission members and papers to be presented by the work committee at the forthcoming National Convention

Steps are to be taken for growing trees and flowery plants at Nyaunghnnapin Camp and for timely completion of construction and renovation measures.
Isolating the regime in Myanmar is not the answer

David I. Steinberg

The following is a reproduction from the article “Isolating the regime in Myanmar is not the answer” by David I Steinberg from the International Herald Tribune published on 28-1-2004.—Ed

The opinion article by Senator Mitch McConnell and Bono (“A heroine of democracy, left far too lonely,” Views, Jan. 19) misses the point. Most of the world would like to see the regime in Myanmar release the Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest. We would like freedom for political prisoners, the participation by all Burmese in the political process and some form of democracy in Myanmar, previously known as Burma. The issue, however, is not these goals, but finding the best way to achieve them.

The United States has, in effect, called for the “unconditional surrender” of the military regime - get out of office and then we will talk. Even in war this can be a questionable means, but as a political and diplomatic strategy it is doomed to failure.

Although U.S. sanctions and the freezing of Burmese assets, together with the authors’ wish to see tourism to Burma halted, may make some feel morally superior, this is not a reason on which to base a foreign policy.

There are three main shortcomings to the approach advocated by McConnell and Bono. First, direct confrontation and denigration of the regime in Burma inevitably lead to its nationalistic response, as it would in any country.

The military government is forced to stand up to the United States or any country in the face of such attacks. They make compromise more, rather than less, difficult. Second, sanctions may hurt the regime, but they will not bring about its demise. This is essentially a pre-industrialized state that can limp along on its own. No neighboring states, nor the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, approve of sanctions against Burma. Sanctions and the lack of a tourist industry in the end only hurt the hundreds of thousands of people who depend on jobs related to foreign investment and travel. It helps to consider how effective sanctions on Cuba have been.

Third, for the United States to base its policies on the status of a single individual is a major error—whether that person be President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan, Vladimir Putin of Russia, Prime Minister Tony Blair of Britain or Aung San Suu Kyi. “Unwavering, uncompromising international support,” as the McConnell and Bono article advocates, will further compound America’s mistakes and prevent Washington from achieving its goals. America did this with the shah of Iran, among others, in the past.

McConnell and Bono call on Burma to be a top priority of the Bush administration. U.S. policy toward Burma, in fact, is one of the lowest priorities of all Asian countries, and nothing is going to change that, at least until the presidential election in the United States. The perception of America’s national interests are too circumscribed and Washington is too involved in other issues, such as terrorism. The U.S. has a one-track foreign policy in Burma—human rights.

That should be an element of any U.S. policy, but it should be pursued in relation to a range of other U.S. interests.

We need intelligent discourse on policy toward Burma. For now, there is a lack of nuance, and Washington is too involved in other issues, among others, in the past.

YANGON, 11 Sept — The delegates of ASEAN and partner country-China attending the Workshop for People-to-People Exchange Programme ASEAN Cultural Interaction at Grassroots, Phase III, accompanied by ASEAN-COCI National Committee Chairman Mohd Ali presided over the workshop. Supervisor Secretary Director Daw Nanda Hmoon of DCI and officials. The workshop chairman delivered an address. The next, Chairman of Mandalay City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein hosted a luncheon in honour of the delegates at Pyaygyon Phaungdaw of Mandalay Kandawgyi Lake. At Yadanaung Myaung Handicraft and Arts Beikman of Mandalay Division Cooperative Syndicate on 78th Street in Mandalay, the delegates viewed silverwares, lacquerwares, glasswares, embroidery works and other handicraft.

The final day programmes of the workshop continued. Leader of Malaysian delegation Mohd Kamil Mohd Ali presided over the workshop. Supervisor was ASEAN-COCI National Committee Secretary Director Daw Nanda Hmoon of DCI.

The Workshop for People-to-People Exchange Programme ASEAN Cultural Interaction at Grassroots, Phase III concludes successfully.
Duties of the police force are great because it is responsible for community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order. Therefore, the Head of State had given guidance to reform the police force to be a systematic one loved by the people and a reserve force of the State.

In his address, Chairman of Myanmar Police Force Administrative Reform Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein said Director-General of MPF Brig-Gen Khin Yi had explained functions and duties of MPF and he would explain the requirements. Duties of the police force are great because it is responsible for community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order. Therefore, the Head of State had given guidance to reform the police force to be a systematic one loved by the people and a reserve force of the State.

He said senior police officers present are those who lead the respective organizations of MPF. He spoke of the need for them to cultivate themselves to be fully-qualified ones to improve the police force in accord with the guidance of the Head of State, to try to become the ones with high morale and to serve the interests of the people. Only then, will they become good qualified leaders. As a good leader, he must have political, economic, administrative and military outlooks and he is to cultivate himself to be one with correct outlook forever. Only when there is correct outlook and right view, can he take up his duties and manage departments under him and members of the MPF correctly, he added.

He also spoke of the need to realize the world events, conditions of the country, the government’s endeavours and individual tasks correctly.

Concerning the State defence, he said, the world events today show that some big nations taking advantages of superiority in military power, technology and wealth, are bullying small developing countries through various media, trying to influence them.

He spoke of the need for the country to build political, economic, administrative and military interests of the people. Only then, will they become wellwishers greeted the elderly.

Aged. After the ceremony, committee members and wellwishers and the working group for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation donated cash to Kayan Home for the Aged in Kayan Township this morning. On the occasion, Chairman of the work committee for Observing the International Day for Older Persons Director General of Social Welfare Department U Sit Myaing explained the purpose of the donation. At the ceremony, the work committee, wellwishers and the working group for Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation donated cash to Kayan Home for the Aged. After the ceremony, committee members and wellwishers greeted the elderly.

Some big nations, taking advantages of superiority in military power, technology and wealth, are bullying small developing countries through various media, trying to influence them.

First and second four-monthly work coordination meeting of MPF for 2004 held

YANGON, 11 Sept—The first and second four-monthly work coordination meeting of Myanmar Police Force for 2004 was held at the MPF Headquarters of the Ministry of Home Affairs this morning, with an address by Chairman of Myanmar Police Force Management Reform Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

Also present on the occasion were Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing, Director-General of MPF Brig-Gen Khin Yi, the directors-general of departments under the ministry, Police Brigadier-Generals, police commanders of States and Divisions, principals of police training schools and commanding officers of police battalions.

Secretary of Myanmar Police Force Administrative Reform Committee Director-General of MPF Brig-Gen Khin Yi reported on measures taken by MPF, reduction of ten major crimes from 1996 to August 2004, security measures for territorial waters and river mouths, prevention against human trafficking and illegal working in foreign countries, laying down two strategies and three tactics in control of narcotic drugs, implementation of 15-year drug elimination project in cooperation with neighbouring countries, salient points of anti-narcotic drugs, work done by six subcommittees of Myanmar Police Force and implementation of 17 future tasks.

In his address, Chairman of Myanmar Police Force Administrative Reform Committee Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein said Director-General of MPF Brig-Gen Khin Yi had explained functions and duties of MPF and he would explain the requirements. Duties of the police force are great because it is responsible for community peace and tranquillity and prevalence of law and order. Therefore, the Head of State had given guidance to reform the police force to be a systematic one loved by the people and a reserve force of the State.

He spoke of the need for officials to make efforts to become a patriotic, capable police force. He said senior police officers present are those who lead the respective organizations of MPF. He spoke of the need for them to cultivate themselves to be fully-qualified ones to improve the police force in accord with the guidance of the Head of State, to try to become the ones with high morale and to serve the interests of the people. Only then, will they become good qualified leaders. As a good leader, he must have political, economic, administrative and military outlooks and he is to cultivate himself to be one with correct outlook forever. Only when there is correct outlook and right view, can he take up his duties and manage departments under him and members of the MPF correctly, he added.

He also spoke of the need to realize the world events, conditions of the country, the government’s endeavours and individual tasks correctly.

Concerning the State defence, he said, the world events today show that some big nations taking advantages of superiority in military power, technology and wealth, are bullying small developing countries through various media and trying to influence them. They invaded and occupied small countries with the use of military power, he noted.

Considering the above-mentioned events, he spoke of the need for the country to build political (see page 15)
China’s western region to increase cooperation in tourism

CHENGDU, 11 Sept.—Representatives attending the West China International Tourism Development Forum vowed to join hands in promoting regional tourism.

With 71 per cent of China’s land space and a population of around 400 million, China’s western region is cited as the origin place of the Chinese nation. It has been prestigious as the world’s natural and historical museum for its amazing landscapes and unique culture.

Since China implemented the strategy of developing the western region, its tourism has been developing rapidly. Last year, overall tourism revenue reached 166 billion yuan (approximately 20 billion US dollars) in the west, one third of that of the entire nation.

The 12 western administration areas, including provinces, autonomous regions and one municipality, have different tourism resources. Increasing regional tourism cooperation is a strong trend, which can be seen when tourism’s competitiveness, promote exchanges with the east and catch up with the international tourism market, said Liu Peng, deputy secretary of Sichuan provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Tourism cooperation is a global trend, based on economic cooperation and can also lead the economic development, said Wang Xingbin, a professor of Chinese Tourism Institute.

China’s western region to increase cooperation in tourism

China’s western region to increase cooperation in tourism

Cyprus Airways to reduce flight destinations

NICOSIA, 10 Sept.—Cyprus Airways (CY), the island’s national carrier, is getting ready to axe three destinations and cut back flights to four others for the winter period as it gears up to sell off two of its Airbus A320s, local media reported on Thursday.

Flights to Warsaw, Budapest and Birmingham are to be axed completely and those to Jeddah and Riyadh are under review, said the report.

As part of the new plan which will come into effect on November 1, flights to Frankfurt and Amman are also expected to be reduced.

CY is implementing fleet reduction as part of a strategic plan to save the airline’s future.

The plan is currently under discussion between management and unions of the entire nation.

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As part of the new plan which will come into effect on November 1, flights to Frankfurt and Amman are also expected to be reduced.

CY is implementing fleet reduction as part of a strategic plan to save the airline’s future.

The plan is currently under discussion between management and unions of the entire nation.

The 12 western administration areas, including provinces, autonomous regions and one municipality, have different tourism resources. Increasing regional tourism cooperation is a strong trend, which can be seen when tourism’s competitiveness, promote exchanges with the east and catch up with the international tourism market, said Liu Peng, deputy secretary of Sichuan provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Tourism cooperation is a global trend, based on economic cooperation and can also lead the economic development, said Wang Xingbin, a professor of Chinese Tourism Institute.
China, Mexico set up trade workgroup

XIAN, 10 Sept — Chinese and Mexican commerce departments on Thursday signed an agreement on setting up a high-level workgroup to facilitate trade and investment.

The workgroup, composed of officials from both governments, is responsible for evaluating and analyzing trade and investment development situations, making proposals and exploring and seeking ways to enhance bilateral cooperation. The group will convene once per year.

Prior to the signing ceremony with Mexican Secretary of Economy Fernando Canales, Chinese Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai said the establishment of the workgroup would help tackle the problems emerging from trade between China and Mexico.

China and Mexico enjoy extensive cooperation in trade and investment, said Bo, adding that the two countries should further promote trade cooperation in energy and mineral products.

Canales said trade between Mexico and China recorded rapid growth in the first five months of this year, with up 50 per cent from the same period last year. The two countries should work together to develop a cooperative trade strategy, he said.

Despite disagreeing with China on whether to end textile quotas on January 1, 2005, the Mexican Government will keep its promises and make efforts to liberalize textile trade, Canales said.

MNA/Xinhua

UN Chief hails progress in India-Pakistan dialogue

UNITED NATIONS, 10 Sept — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan welcomed on Wednesday the progress made at the weekend meeting between Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers, which agreed on a series of proposals to boost the nine-month-old peace process.

Natwar Singh of India and Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri of Pakistan met on Sunday and Monday in New Delhi and agreed on a timetable for talks in the next few months on issues such as nuclear and conventional weapons, and Coast Guard cooperation.

Both sides also agreed that Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will meet on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York later this month.

Annan “is heartened that the two sides continue to make steady progress toward resolving outstanding issues and improving their bilateral relations,” UN spokesman Fred Eckhard told reporters. “The Secretary-General attaches great importance to the success of these efforts, which would have a highly salutary effect not only on the lives of the peoples of the two countries but also on regional and global stability,” he said.

MNA/Xinhua

First China SMEs fair to lead SMEs to int’l market

BEIJING, 10 Sept — First China Small and Medium Enterprises Fair, slated for October 18 to 22 in Guangzhou, will provide a platform for Chinese SMEs to enter the international market, a local official said here on Thursday.

Preparation for the SMEs Fair, the first of its kind in China, is well underway, Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province You Ningfeng said at a Press conference in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

You said business organizations from the United States, Japan, Britain, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Macao have made active responses to invitations to the fair. Carefour and a number of other international retail chain companies have already confirmed their participation.

Guangzhou, the capital of Guangdong, is the birthplace of private businesses in the southern coast of China.

You said the fair will be staged at the same time as two other large-scale export commodity fairs in Guangzhou and Shenzhen, which will draw a large number of guests from overseas. The hosts will attract more foreign visitors to the SME Fair to provide a platform for SMEs to have direct contact with foreign clients.

MNA/Xinhua

11 kilos of hashish, 3 kilos of opium seized in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 10 Sept — The Pakistani police have recovered 11 kilos of hashish and three kilos of opium at Uthal check post in the southwestern Baluchistan Province.

The Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) Thursday reported that four drug peddlers were also nabbed in the police raid late on Wednesday.

APP detailed that working on a tip-off, police personnel on patrol duty stopped the suspects aboard a passenger bus and recovered the contraband. A case has been registered and further investigations are underway, said APP. — MNA/Xinhua

Tallest wooden pagoda to have firefighters on guard

TAIYUAN, 10 Sept — China plans to form a fire brigade to protect its oldest wooden pagoda — nearly 1,000 years old and believed the tallest of its kind in the world — from possible flames.

According to the tentative plan, more than 20 firefighters and a fire engine will guard Yingxian Wooden Pagoda, a Buddhist heritage site built in 1056 in north China’s Shanxi Province.

The pagoda will also have a lighting rod installed. Earlier this year an ancient temple in Shanxi, famous for its ancient Buddha statue, was damaged by lightning. The nine-storey octagonal pagoda stands 65.86 metres, equal to a 22-storey building; its first two stories have begun to lean northeastward in recent years. The pagoda is 115 years older and 11.36 metres taller than the renowned Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy.

Guo Yimin, head of Shanxi provincial fire brigade, said the pagoda is highly flammable because it’s made entirely of wood. Even a burning match could destroy the whole building, he said.

Until now, no local fire station has existed in Yingxian County. It takes at least half an hour for the nearest fire brigade in the neighbouring county to reach the scene in case of fire, which would be too late, Guo said.

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese youths dance during a cultural festival in Xian, the capital of Shaanxi Province in central China, on 9 Sept, 2004. The so-called ‘civilized and happy community’ festival was held to encourage local residents to improve their living environment.

INTERNET

A young Cuban is seen at his house with the windows already secured in preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Ivan. — INTERNET
US rescued from shock defeat after 1-1 draw against Panama

PANAMA CITY, 10 Sept—Cobi Jones struck deep into injury time to secure the United States a 1-1 draw against Panama in their CONCACAF region Group A World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.

Jones turned last-minute saviour from nine metres out after teammate Landon Donovan had pushed the ball away from a mass of bodies in the penalty area. The goal rescued the US from a shock defeat after Panama had been given a 70th-minute lead by Roberto Brown's tap-in following a goalmouth scramble.

Brown's goal was due reward for Panama after they had pushed forward for most of the second half. But the Americans also went close through Clint Mathis in the 26th minute and Greg Vanney midway through the second half.

The US has five points from three qualifying games while Panama has four.—MNA/Reuters

Paralympic Flame lit in Athens, torch relay starts

ATHENS, 10 Sept—The Flame for Athens Paralympic Games was lit here Thursday evening in the centre of Athens below the world famous Acropolis, starting the 9th torch relay in Paralympic history.

Addressing the lighting ceremony which started at 7:40 pm local time, President of Athens Organizing Committee (ATHOC) Gianna Angelopoulos-Daskalaki invited the whole world to the Paralympic Games, which will be hosted by Greece for the first time in its history.

"Highlighting the athlete, and not the disability, the Athens Paralympic Games will offer everyone the unique opportunity of experiencing at first hand athletes’ pursuit of outstanding performances," she said.

"The strength and ability of Paralympic athletes and their very high level of competition will inspire humankind to live out this unique celebration by participating in an event that shows human endeavour at its finest," she added.

Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis expressed hope that the Paralympic Games will send the world a message of humanity.

"With the successful and safe organization of the Olympic Games, we sent to the whole world a message of peace, friendship and cooperation among people and nations," he said.

"With the flame of the Paralympic Games, we are now sending a message of culture and, on top of all, humanity," he stressed.

The flame was lit by rubbing two stones together at the Temple of Hephaestus, in reference to the ancient Greek god of fire who was also lame in Greek myths.

First torch bearer Costas Fykos, who won two gold medals in Paralympics in Sydney 2000, started the torch relay by lighting his torch from the cauldron.

The cauldron was lit by Performer Danilo Zeka, who carried the fire from the temple where the flame was ignited.

A total of 705 torch bearers will carry the Paralympic Flame through 54 municipalities of Attica, covering a total distance of 410 kilometres. Olympic and Paralympic medalists, world champions and other celebrities will be among those carrying the Flame.

The Flame will reach the main stadium on September 17, where it will burn until the end of the Games on September 28.

Five countries confirm participation in Pacific Cup

BOGOTA, 10 Sept—Swimmers from Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru have confirmed their participation in the Pacific Cup, to be held at the Pan-American swimming halls of Cali, on 23-26 September.

This competition, counting with the participation of 500 athletes, will include swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming.

The organizers of the contest have confirmed Colombia has already defined its swimming and synchronized-swimming teams, while the list of participants in diving and water polo is yet to be defined.

In synchronized swimming, the Valle del Cauca team, will be the base for the national team, with a group of 10 swimmers coached by Janeth Hatiuska.

Honduras fight back from behind to 2-2 draw with Guatemala

SAN PEDRO SULA (Honduras), 10 Sept—Honduras fought back from two goals behind to draw 2-2 with Guatemala in a pulsating World Cup qualifier on Wednesday.

The result extended Guatemala’s unbeaten run to 10 games but deprived their Honduran coach Ramon Maradiaga a victorious return as he faced his homeland for the first time in competitive international.

Maradiaga played for Honduras when they made their only World Cup finals appearance in 1982 and coached the team which beat Brazil at the Copa America three years ago.

Guatemala, who have never played in the World Cup finals, won their first two games in Group B of the second stage of the CONCACAF qualifiers and went ahead on Wednesday when Carlos Ruiz scored from close range following a corner in the 18th minute.

They extended their lead three minutes after halftime when Dwight Pecoraro also netted from close range. Midfielder Amado Guevara quickly reduced the deficit with a 51st-minute goal and Italian-based striker David Suazo finished off a counter-attack to equalize 12 minutes later.

Guatemala lead the four-team group with seven points from three games followed by Honduras with five.—MNA/Reuters

Ancient predecessor of football to be revived in east China

JINAN, 10 Sept—A match of cuju, the predecessor of modern football (soccer), will be held in the city of Zibo in east China’s Shandong Province on 17 September.

The city’s Linzi District, the site of the match, has been recognized by the world football community as the origin of football.

Organizers noted that the match will observe rules dating from China’s imperial Song Dynasty (960 AD—1279 AD). There are 10 members on each of the two opposing teams. The team that fails to keep the ball from falling to the ground will lose the game.

According to historical records, cuju was a very popular and widespread game in China’s Spring and Autumn Period (770 BC – 476 BC) in Linzi, the capital of the Qi State (479 AD-502 AD) and one of the largest cities in the world in its time.

The game also influenced China’s neighbours. According to researches by Japanese experts, cuju was introduced into Japan 1,400 years ago by returning Japanese emissaries and students who had learned it in China.

In Chinese, ‘cu’ means kick and ‘ju’ means ball. On July 15 of this year, FIFA president Sepp Blatter acknowledged that China is the birthplace of football and that the ancient game of cuju is the true origin of the sport. And Peter Velappan, General Secretary of the Asia Football Confederation declared at a news conference that football originates from the Linzi District in Zibo, the capital of the Qi State (479 AD-502 AD). There are 10 members on each of the two opposing teams. The team that fails to keep the ball from falling to the ground will lose the game.

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The Objectives of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

* To vitalize patriotism and nationalism in all citizens
* To preserve and safeguard Myanmar cultural heritage
* To perpetuate genuine Myanmar music, dance and traditional fine arts
* To preserve Myanmar national character
* To nurture spiritual development of the youths
* To prevent influence of alien culture

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Use Natural Gas Vehicles and save fuel oil

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