Virati papa, to refrain from sin; this is the way to auspiciousness.
**Basic Driving Course opened**

**Yangon,** 19 Sept — An opening ceremony of Basic Driving Course No 1/2004, jointly organized by Road Transport Administration Department under the Ministry of Rail Transportation and Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation, was held at RTAD office, Ywahtagyi, this afternoon, with addresses by Minister for Home Affairs Col Tin Hlaing who is also in-charge of women’s affairs of the Union Solidarity and Development Association and Minister for Rail Transportation Maj-Gen Aung Min.

It was also attended by Deputy Minister for Rail Transportation U Pe Than, Deputy Minister for Transport Col Nyan Tun Aung, Director-General U Hla Thaung Myint of Road Transport Administration Department and officials, officials of the economic working group of MWAF and 64 trainees.

The 8-week course is opened on weekends at RTAD office, Ywahtagyi.—MNA

**Wellwishers for a Jivitadana Sangha Hospital Honoured**

The 28th merit-sharing ceremony for setting up medical trust-fund of Jivitadana Sangha Hospital and ceremony to honour wellwishers in progress.—MNA

**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

**Myanmar delegation arrives back**

**Yangon,** 19 Sept — The Myanmar delegation led by Chief Justice U Aung Toe arrived back here by air yesterday night after attending the 25th General Assembly of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, from 12 to 17 September.

The Myanmar delegation was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Chairman of Civil Service Selection and Training Board Dr Than Nyun, Deputy Chief Justice U Thein Soe, Deputy Attorney-General U Aung Than Shwe and Secretary Dr Myo Aung.

With the assistance of the Government, there emerged 19 industrial zones across the nation. Of them, Mandalay industrial zone, Monywa industrial zone and Ayethaya industrial zone of Taunggyi are engaged in setting up the foundries and moulding workshops.

With advancement in foundries and moulding, progress has been made in the private sector.

Therefore, with the assistance of the Government, private industrialists and officials are urged to make relentless efforts for development of the private industrial sector.

**Officials leave for Philippines**

**Yangon,** 19 Sept — General Secretary Dr Myo Aung Kyaw of Myanmar Rice and Paddy Wholesalers Association and Assistant Supervisor Daw Naw Al Mar of the seeds division of Myanmar Agriculture Service left here by air for the Philippines this morning to attend the Post-Harvest Technology Training Course in International Rice Research Institute in the Philippines from 20 September to 8 October.

They were seen off at Yangon International Airport by officials.—MNA
Day of violence across Iraq leaves 52 dead

Baghdad, 18 Sept — A suicide car bomber slammed into a line of police cars sealing off a Baghdad neighbourhood Friday as American troops rounded up dozens of suspected militants, capping a day of violence across Iraq that left at least 52 dead.

Among the 63 suspects arrested were Syrians, Sudanese and Egyptians, officials said. Coalition forces say foreign fighters are playing a major role in the insurgency.

Early Saturday, a car bomb exploded outside the Iraqi national guard headquarters in the northern city of Kirkuk, killing at least eight people and wounding 10, the national guard said.

The blast tore through a crowd of people waiting to apply for jobs in the force, said National Guard Gen Anwar Mohammed Amin. In Baghdad, a roadside bomb exploded in a small sidestreet in central Baghdad on Saturday, killing one person and wounding two, police said.

The blast in Baghdad’s Karradaah neighbourhood, a main shopping and commercial district, also destroyed a passing vehicle, a police officer and witnesses at the site of the explosion said.

Friday’s car bombing in Baghdad, which killed three people and wounded 23, was the second this week targeting the capital’s beleaguered police forces. The mounting violence has increased pressure on Iraqis working to restore stability in their country but seen as collaborators because of their cooperation with US forces.

Iraq militants claim to hold 10 hostages

Baghdad, 18 Sept — A militant group in Iraq claimed it is holding 10 hostages working for an American-Turkish company in a tape broadcast by the Arabic television station Al-Jazeera on Saturday.

The previously unknown group, calling itself the “Salafist Brigades of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq,” gave an ultimatum of three days for the company to leave Iraq or it will kill the 10 hostages, the station’s presenter said.

The Al-Jazeera presenter said the station received a copy of the tape but did not say how. The group identified the company as an American-Turkish firm operating in Iraq, but did not give a name.

The station only aired a clip showing the 10 hostages, sitting under the banner of the group. The group didn’t say what were the nationalities of the hostages, or where they were captured.

About 120 foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq, and many have been killed by their captors. Insurgents have carried out most of the kidnappings in a bid to drive foreign companies out of Iraq and thwart the US-led reconstruction of the country.

Turkey warns EU not to meddle in internal affairs

ANKARA, 19 Sept — Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday told the European Union (EU) that it should not become involved in Turkey’s internal affairs.

He made the remarks in response to a statement by an EU spokesman who warned Turkey not to reintroduce a controversial measure to criminalize adultery, saying it would hinder the country’s bid to enter the EU.

Erdogan told party members in televised comments that Turkey had done all it needed to do to meet the political criteria for starting EU entry talks.

“Let nobody try to pressure Turkey by using the EU (as an excuse)... We are Turkey and we make our own decisions. Nobody should try to impose conditions on us concerning the EU,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Turkey military vehicles catch fire after a car bomb exploded as a US military convoy was passing by in Baghdad, Iraq, on 18 Sept, 2004. Three soldiers were wounded in the attack, the military said. — Internet

Government warns Americans of Iraq travel

WASHINGTON, 18 Sept — The State Department reminded Americans Friday of the dangers of travelling in Iraq, a day after two American construction workers were kidnapped from their home in Baghdad.

“The security threat to all American citizens in Iraq remains extremely high, with a high risk of attacks on civilians,” the department said in a travel warning update. “...All vehicular travel in Iraq is extremely dangerous.”

The department, without providing additional details, said it had credible information that terrorists have targeted civil aviation, and warned of the danger of using civilian aircraft to enter or leave Iraq.

Militants are targeting hotels, restaurants, police stations, checkpoints, foreign diplomatic missions, international organizations and other locations with expatriate personnel, the department said.

Attacks occur throughout the day, but travel at night is especially dangerous, the warning said. It described as particularly dangerous: Travelling in or through Ramadi and Fallujah; between al-Hillah and Baghdad; and between the International Zone and Baghdad International Airport.

Americans who visit or live in Iraq have been urged for some time to pay close attention to their security, avoid crowds and inform the US Embassy of their presence in the country. More than 100 foreign embassies have been abducted since the US-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 and many have been killed.

On Thursday, two Americans and a Briton were seized from their house in an upscale Baghdad neighbourhood where many embassies and foreign companies are based, according to the Iraqi Interior Ministry and witnesses.

The three — identified Friday as Americans Jack Hensley and Eugene Armstrong and Briton Kenneth Bigley — were employed by Gulf Services Co, a Middle East-based construction firm. — Internet
Two US soldiers among 21 killed in Iraq blasts

Baghdad, 18 Sept— Insurgents killed 19 Iraqis and two US soldiers Saturday in bombings across Baghdad and in northern Iraq, and kidnappers threatened to kill two Americans and a Briton within 48 hours if their demand was not met.

The deadliest attack occurred in the northern city of Kirkuk, where witnesses said a young man driving a gray Opel sedan sped down a dirt road leading to the back of an Iraqi National Guard building then blew up the vehicle near a crowd of recruits, killing 19 people and wounding 63.

Two US soldiers were killed and 11 wounded in two car bombings on the road leading to the Baghdad International Airport. In the first attack Saturday afternoon, a suicide bomber drove up beside a convoy near a checkpoint outside the airport and detonated the vehicle, wounding three soldiers, according to Master Sgt David Larsen of the 1st Calvary Division.

Another convoy on its way to assist the first was also hit by a car bomb. Larsen said. That attack killed two soldiers and destroyed two Humvees and a Bradley Fighting Vehicle in which some of the troops were riding.

A security alert had been issued before the attacks for travel on the airport road and US Embassy personnel were temporarily prohibited from using it.

Around 10:30 pm, US forces launched an airstrike near the restive city of Fallujah on “an armed checkpoint” linked to Abu Musab Zarqawi, a Jordanian-born militant, according to a military statement. “Informants linked the checkpoint to kidnappings and executions in the Fallujah area,” the statement said.

“Evidence indicates Iraq citizens have been kidnapped at such checkpoints, taken to outlying areas where they were forced to dig their own graves and then executed.”

US forces have bombed Fallujah almost daily for nearly two weeks. Officials have said they believe that Zarqawi, who has been linked to car bombings, kidnappings and other violence, uses the Sunni Muslim city as a base for his operations.

Internet

Government subsidies cause rise in Chinese grain production

HANGZHOU, 18 Sept — Chinese grain farmers’ income grew a record amount in the first half of this year, thanks largely to government’s incentives.

In the January-June period this year, Chinese grain farmers income was 1,371 yuan (165.2 US dollars), a year-on-year increase of 13 per cent, the highest rate since 1997, Zheng Xini, deputy director of the Central Policy Research Institute, said at a conference.

Allowing for price fluctuations, the income growth rate was 2.1 per cent higher than that of all farmers. It was 4.3 per cent higher than of the urban population’s disposable income, according to Zheng.

Zheng said government policies to encourage grain production were directly responsible for the income rise.

Policies included a stricter protection of arable land, direct subsidies for grain growers, tax cuts and exemptions and reform of the grain distribution system.

The Central Government alone earmarked 2.47 billion US dollars to support the taxation system in rural areas. It allotted more than 1.2 billion US dollars for direct subsidies to farmers.

China to become world’s second biggest citrus producer

HANGZHOU, 18 Sept— China is expected to produce 15 million tons of citrus fruits in 2004 and overtake the United States as the world’s second largest citrus producer, after Brazil, according to the China Citrus Institute (CCI).

The country’s citrus output has so far grown for four consecutive years, said CCI. Citrus production in southeast China’s Zhejiang Province, a major citrus producer in China, was affected by Typhoon Rantanim, the strongest typhoon to hit the Chinese Mainland since 1956. But output should reach the level of last year, about 1.8 million tons, said experts.— MNA/Xinhua

Militants threaten to kill US, UK hostages in Iraq

Baghdad, 18 Sept — Militants in Iraq threatened Saturday to kill 13 hostages, including two Americans and a Briton, and staged car bomb attacks killing 23 people in Kirkuk and two US soldiers near Baghdad.

A militant Iraqi group seized 10 employees of a US-Turkish firm and threatened to kill them unless the company quit Iraq within three days, Al Jazeera television reported Saturday.

In another incident, Internet video footage showed two US and a British hostage kneeling blindfolded, with a hooded gunman aiming his weapon at the head of one captive. They were seized from a house in Baghdad Thursday.

The gunman said the Tawhid and Jihad group led by Jordanian militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi would kill the men unless Iraqi women prisoners were freed from two Iraqi jails within 48 hours.

The US military said no women were held at either the Abu Ghabr or Umm Qasr prisons cited by the militants.

Zarqawi’s group has claimed responsibility for many of the bloodiest attacks in Iraq, and in May released video footage of the beheading of US hostage Nicholas Berg.

Guerrilla violence and instability across Iraq have raised doubts that elections can be held in January as planned.

In the third major suicide attack this week against Iraq’s beleaguered security forces, a car bomber Saturday killed at least 23 people outside the headquarters of the Iraqi National Guard in the northern city of Kirkuk, hospital officials said.

The bomb ripped through a crowd of people waiting to apply for jobs at the offices in Kirkuk, 155 miles north of Baghdad.

In Baghdad, a car bomb blast killed two US soldiers on the road to the international airport. They were travelling to the scene of an earlier suspected suicide car bomb attack on the road that had wounded three soldiers, the army said.

Attempt on Iraqi oil officials’ life fails

Mosul, 18 Sept — A senior official with Iraq’s state-run North Oil Co survived an assassination attempt Saturday after his convoy came under attack in the northeastern city of Mosul, police said.

Mohammed Zibari, the head of the company’s oil products department in the Nineveh province, was travelling in a three-vehicle convoy on his way to work in Mosul when unidentified gunmen opened fire, killing five of his bodyguards and wounding four others, said police Lt Mohammed Ali.

Zibari, who is in charge of supplying the province with oil and gas, escaped unharmed, Ali said. Two cars were badly damaged in the attack.

Guerrillas waging a 17-month insurgency here have repeatedly targeted Iraq’s crucial oil infrastructure in a bid to destabilize Iraq and undermine the US-backed interim authorities.

Internet

British soldiers at a defensive position outside the office of guerrillas Shite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr in Basra, Iraq, on 18 Sept, 2004.
FM says Malaysia vindicated by Annan’s comment on Iraq

KUALA LUMPUR, 18 Sept — UN Secretary General Kofi Annan description of the war on Iraq as “illegal” proves Malaysia was right in opposing the conflict, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said.

“The recent statement by Annan that the war in Iraq is illegal has justified our opinion against the invasion of Iraq,” Syed Hamid was quoted as saying by the Star newspaper.

“We now hope the US-led forces will leave the country and let the Iraqis determine their future government,” he said.

Mainly-Muslim Malaysia, which heads the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) was a strong opponent of the US-led invasion of Iraq.

Annan told the BBC Wednesday that the United States had failed to seek a needed second resolution before launching the war in March 2003.

“I’ve indicated that it was not in conformity with the UN charter from our point of view, and from the charter point of view it was illegal,” Annan said.

The US government hit back by claiming it considered that a previous UN resolution passed four months before the conflict gave it sufficient authority to wage its action because Saddam Hussein had refused to surrender suspected stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

After a year and a half of US troop deployment in Iraq, no such weapons have been found.

Top US contractors in Iraq will lose millions of dollars

WASHINGTON, 18 Sept — Top US contractors in Iraq such as construction giant Washington Group International will lose hundreds of millions of dollars of potential business due to a shift in funding priorities, US officials said on Thursday.

The State Department, subject to approval from Congress, plans to divert more than 3 billion US dollars originally earmarked for water and electricity projects in Iraq to beef up security ahead of elections planned for January.

That means billions of dollars in water and electricity sector contracts are unlikely to reach their ceiling values, disappointing prime contractors hoping for big returns for their dangerous work in Iraq.

In recent months, as the security situation has deteriorated, foreign contractors in Iraq have increasingly become the targets of guerrillas and kidnappers.

Released Jordanian driver returns to Amman

AMMAN, 18 Sept — The Jordanian Foreign Ministry said Friday that Turki Khalifah al-Breizatis, who was released after being held by kidnappers in Iraq for two days, has returned to Amman.

Breizatis expressed thanks to the Jordanian Government and related Iraqi sides which helped to rescue him, ministry spokesman Ali Ayed said.

The Jordanian citizen’s release on Thursday came one day after his employer Abu Sheeh Transport Co announced that it had stopped all operations in Iraq.

An Iraqi group calling itself Squads of Unification Lions kidnapped Breizatis on Tuesday and gave his firm which sent fuel to the US military 48 hours to quit Iraq or to kill Breizatis otherwise.

More than a dozen of Jordanians have been kidnapped in Iraq in the past two months, but most of them were released safely after their employers pulled out of Iraq.

The spokesman expressed gratitude for China’s aid to Russia after the tragic Beslan hostage-taking event that killed over 330 people.

Mental stress grows in US troops

WASHINGTON, 18 Sept — Guerilla warfare in Iraq is putting US troops under growing mental stress as the military strategies to retain and recruit soldiers, according to a study cited by the Army Reserve commander on Thursday.

“This is just very tough business,” said Lieutenant General James Helmly, noting that military chores from driving supply trucks to directing traffic in Iraq had become battlefield jobs because of bombings and other growing attacks by guerrillas.

“Driving that truck is one of the most hazardous damned occupations we have in Iraq,” he said. “Truck drivers, frankly, and MPs (military police) are frontline troops these days.”

He said the survey suggested that an unusually high percentage of US troops in support roles had been involved in the fighting in Iraq, which has killed more than 1,000 Americans and thousands of Iraqis.

“As you know, there is no more secure area,” he said in an interview with reporters, adding that the study of psychological stress was conducted by the government and involved troops from all the US armed services.
Ex-commander facing investigations over prisoner abuse in Iraq

COPENHAGEN, 18 Sept — The former commander of the Danish troops in Iraq will face an investigation over allegations of prisoner abuse during interrogations at the Danish camp in southern Iraq.

Danish media reported on Friday, Battalion Commander Lieutenant-Colonel Henrik Flach and three other officers were recalled from Iraq last month in a prisoner abuse scandal which has stunned the egalitarian Scandinavian country.

If found guilty of breaking military law, Flach could face up to a year in prison.

The United States and Britain have already charged a number of their soldiers with sexually abusing or assaulting Iraqis. The Danish Army could not be reached for comment.

Flach told Danish news agency Ritzau he had not yet officially received notification of the investigation, but was expecting it.

He said he had reviewed the Army’s case against him with his lawyer and could not find grounds for an investigation.

In August, Reserve Captain Annette Hommel was sent home to face an Army investigation because a civilian interpreter had complained about the way she interrogated prisoners.

Hommel, 37, has denied the charges.

The Army then said it was investigating several other soldiers and four incidents of abuse. The investigation is expected to finish in one to two months.

Last week, a second, unidentified, Danish soldier was suspended.

Army investigators have said Hommel subjected Iraqi prisoners to humiliating and degrading treatment including verbal humiliation, forcing them to maintain painful postures and restricting access to food, water and toilets.

Denmark has around 500 troops stationed near the southern city of Basra.

The prisoner abuse scandal first erupted in April when CBS television published photos taken in late 2003 showing American troops abusing Iraqis held at Baghdad’s Abu Ghraib Prison.

Britain has charged one of its soldiers with murdering a civilian in Iraq and announced military trials for four other soldiers accused of sexual abuse of detainees and one for the non-fatal shooting of an Iraqi boy.

Kerry eliminates gap with Bush in polls

WASHINGTON, 18 Sept — Two national polls released Thursday showed that US Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry has significantly narrowed his gap with President George W Bush, settling into a virtual tie in the race for the White House.

The Pew Research Centre and Harris Interactive found equal levels of support for the two candidates as Kerry rebounded from the withering attacks the Republicans have launched during the party’s convention that ended on 2 September.

The latest of two Pew polls, conducted September 11-14 showed Bush and Kerry were tied with 46 per cent of support among registered voters each. An earlier Pew poll, conducted September 8-10, showed Bush led Kerry by 52 per cent of registered voters to 40 per cent.

While Bush leads Kerry on Iraq and the war on terrorism, Kerry regained his advantage over Bush on the economy, the Pew polls showed. “This poll finds a lot of the positive impact Bush had in the convention remains. But Bush’s vulnerabilities on Iraq and the economy continue,” Pew said in a report.

The Harris Interactive poll for The Wall Street Journal, which was conducted September 9-13, gave Kerry a 48 to 47 per cent lead over Bush.

Soon after the Republican convention, Bush led Kerry by up to 11 percentage points, forcing Kerry to shuffle his staff and sharpen his message. Several other recent polls have shown Bush’s convention bounce was fading.—MNA/Xinhua

UN calls for contributions to peacekeepers in Afghanistan

UNITED NATIONS, 19 Sept — The United Nations Security Council on Friday urged world governments to contribute troops and other resources to the international peacekeeping force in Afghanistan, which is going to hold general elections in early October.

The Council unanimously adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the NATO-led force (ISAF) for another 12 months. ISAF’s current mandate is due to expire on October 13. The resolution “recognizes the need to strengthen the International Security Assistance Force, and in this regard calls upon member states to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources” to it.

It also recognized the constraints upon the full implementation of the Bonn peace agreement resulting from concerns about the security situation in parts of Afghanistan, in particular in the light of the upcoming elections.

The Council authorized ISAF to take all necessary measures to fulfil its mandate. —MNA/Xinhua

Family urges captors to release Briton kidnapped in Iraq

LONDON, 18 Sept — The family of a British civil engineer who was kidnapped while working in Iraq called on Friday for the captors to release him, stressing that they were “devastated” by the kidnapping.

The British Foreign Office has confirmed that Kenneth Bigley, from the north west of England, was seized on Thursday from his house in Baghdad’s Mansour neighbourhood, together with two Americans.

“We were devastated to find that Ken had been taken, and we are still struggling to come to terms with what is happening,” Bigley’s family said in a statement.

“It is hard to understand why Ken would be targeted in this way but we would appeal to those who have taken him to please return him safely to us,” the family said.

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has called the family, assuring them that all efforts were being made to find Bigley.

Iraqi interim PM to visit Britain

LONDON, 18 Sept — Iraqi interim Prime Minisiter Ayad Allawi will pay a one-day visit to Britain and hold talks with British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Sunday over Iraq’s security situation and upcoming elections, Blair’s spokesman said on Thursday.

It will be the first time for the new Iraqi leader to visit Britain and he is expected to stay until Monday. After that, he will continue his way to the UN General Assembly in New York, the spokesman said.

The spokesman said the British Government believes elections could take place in Iraq early next year despite the deteriorating security situation.

“There is a real hunger for the first time for Iraqis to be able, without intimidation, to choose their own representatives,” the spokesman said.

“Clearly there are still problems both in Afghanistan and Iraq but that should not be allowed to get in the way of democratic elections,” he told reporters.

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The Council authorized ISAF to take all necessary measures to fulfil its mandate. —MNA/Xinhua

A suicide car bomber struck near a major police checkpoint in central Baghdad on Friday, killing at least five people and wounding 20, health ministry and government sources said. An Iraqi fireman battles a burning car, following an explosion near a police station in Rashid Street in central Baghdad, on 17 Sept, 2004. —INTERNET
The opening ceremony of self-reliant library in Sabadwin Village in Ayadaw Township, Monywa District, Sagaing Division.— KYEMON

Up to 14 September 2004, altogether 8,104 self-reliant libraries were opened nationwide.

People living in Ywamagyi Village in Yepawle Village-tract in Hmawby Township gain knowledge through a library opened in the village.— KYEMON

With the participation of all the people including writers, publishers, distributors, readers and the rural people themselves, village libraries will come into being one after another.
Secretary-2 inspects construction of Kayan Sluice Gate,…

(from page 1)

The Secretary-2 and party inspected construction of Kayan sluice gate and 22 feet gate for passing of vessels and gave instructions.

Construction-6 of Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation is building the sluice gate with the aim of preventing river water from flowing into the lands and from flooding in Kayan, Thongwa and Thalnlyin Townships, supplying water to the farmlands after storing fresh water during the late monsoon period, retaining moisture of cold season crops, preventing salt water and silt from flowing into the fields and being salted in those fields.

There will be 40 valves in the concrete sluice gate. On completion of it, the gate will benefit 30,000 acres of farmlands.

The Secretary-2 and party went to Yangon-Thalnlyin No-2 Bridge Construction site in Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township.

Project Superintending Engineer (Project) U Myint Lwin reported on data of the project, progress of work and completion of the project as scheduled. Deputy Minister for Construction Brig-Gen Myint Thein and Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe gave supplementary reports.

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe also reported on arrangements for cultivation of monsoon and summer paddies, beans and pulses, oil and industrial crops and vegetables in 30-mile radius of Yangon International Airport all year round, dams built in Yangon Division, sluice gates and river water pumping projects, cultivation of various kinds of crops on 55,000 acres of lands in Kayan and Thongwa Townships through irrigation from Moeyungyi Lake, arrangements for supply of water from Ngamoyeik canal to Thalnlyin and Kayuakktan Townships, implementation of the first phase of the project in 30-mile radius of Yangon International Airport and others.

In his discussions, the Secretary-2 gave instructions on completion of the Yangon-Thalnlyin No-2 Bridge Construction Project in time, effective use of machinery and materials, compilation of correct data on the project, cooperation with departments concerned for successful implementation of greening project in 30-mile radius of Yangon International Airport and use of CNG-engine tractors and river water pumps.

The six-lane 4,540 feet reinforced concrete Yangon-Thalnlyin No-2 Bridge is 72 feet wide and it has six-foot walkway on each side and can stand 75 tons of load.

The bridge construction special group-1 of Public Works of the Ministry of Construction is constructing the bridge linking Dagon Myothit (Seikkan) Township and Thalnlyin Township for ensuring smooth and secure transport and regional development.

MNA

Korean journalist delegation visits Bago

YANGON, 19 Sept — Visiting Korean delegation led by Journalist Mr Kim Jin Ho of the Kyung Hyang Daily News of ROK, accompanied by Counsellor Mr Park Joonyong of Korean Embassy, this morning visited Bago.

At the Kambawzathadi Palace of King Bayintnaung in Bago, an official briefed them on the palace and answered their queries. Next, they visited the Archaeological museum and the palace. The delegation also visited Shwemawdaw Pagoda and Shwethalyaung reclining Buddha Image in Bago. Under the information delegations exchange programme between ASEAN nations and the Republic of Korea, the Korean delegation arrived here on 17 August.

MNA

Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung inspects Thayet Cement Plant.

YANGON, 19 Sept — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung on 17 September arrived at the Pwintbyu Textile Factory project of the Myanmar Textile Industries in Magway Division and inspected construction work, installation of machinery and trial run.

At the project, the minister inspected progress of the construction of the water treatment plant, building for chiller, machine shop and foundry shop. Next, he met responsible officials of the factory.

The minister and party yesterday morning inspected the Winthuza Shop and soap factory in Magway and gave instructions.

In the afternoon, the minister and party went to the maize product factory project (Yanpaec) of the Myanmar Foodstuff industries near Payatkye Village in Taungdwingyi Township and met officials concerned.

At the meeting, factory manager reported on progress of construction of buildings and installation of power lines and water supply tasks. He gave instructions on timely construction works and gathering of maize grains for foodstuff production.

Afterwards, the minister inspected progress of maize oil factory construction and feedstuff factory.

In the evening, Minister U Aung Thaung arrived at Thayet Cement Factory and inspected production process. He also met officials and staff of the factory and gave instructions on boosting production as well as financial matters.

Industry-1 Minister inspects factories in Magway Division

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
Cash and kind donated to monasteries ...

Yangon Division Fisheries Enterprise, the Ministry of Mines, Yangon Division Salt Industry, families of the Traditional Medicines Department, and medical houses such as Sandi, Tun Shwe Wa, Great Wall, Htet Lin, Thamadawgyi U Shwe Hnya, and Aung Myitta Company, also donated rice, edible oil, iodized salt, toothpaste, traditional medicines, soap, and ball-point pens to Sayadaws.

Families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), local authoritative bodies, social organizations, companies, and wellwishers donated cash to the trust funds of respective monasteries. Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa and members of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air), also donated cash to the trust funds of the monastery. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister Maj-Gen Sein Htwa and Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko accepted the donations.

Officiating staff of Tatmadaw families to a Sayadaw at the donation ceremony for monasteries in Mingala Taungnyunt Township. — MNA

Roads, bridges construction ...

They also inspected Thanthamagyi Bridge Construction Project in Yanbye Township.

Thanthamagyi Bridge will be 552.4 feet long. The bridge will have 24 feet wide motor road and three feet wide pedestrian ways on both sides. Its clearance will be 111 feet wide and six feet high. The bridge is being built of iron frame and reinforced concrete. The construction task was completed by 85 per cent. Efforts are being made for completion of the bridge at the end of October.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party arrived at the construction site of Minkyaung Creek Bridge Project in Yanbye Township. Senior Engineer U Tin Soe reported on preparations for installation of 60 metres long steel frame and construction of No 6 pier.

Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave instructions on efforts to be made for installing the steel frame and building the pier, worksite safety and supervision to be made for timely completion of the tasks meeting the set standard. He inspected the construction site. Minkyaung Creek Bridge built of iron frame and reinforced concrete will be 2,704.2 feet long. The bridge will have 24 feet wide motor road and three feet wide pedestrian ways on both sides. Its clearance is 171 feet wide and 38 feet high. The project has been implemented by 80 per cent. The plan is under way for completion of the bridge at the end of December.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than presented school stationery for students of Affiliated Basic Education Primary School at the project site.

On arrival at the briefing hall of Wamphaik Bridge, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than gave necessary instructions and attended to the needs.

At the site of Thazintanpauk Bridge Project in Yanbye Township, Assistant Engineer U Aung Thein of Public Works submitted reports on completion of No 6 pier, progress in building No 5 and No 4 piers. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than fulfilled the requirements and inspected the construction site.

Afterwards, they proceeded to Thanthamagyi Bridge Construction Project in Yanbye Township. Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than heard reports on construction of No 2 approach structure and bored pile and progress of tasks and attended to the needs.

In the evening, they arrived back at the site of Thanthamagyi Bridge Project and inspected the site. Out of 14 bridges which are 180 feet and above long, eight bridges have been completed. So, efforts are being made for opening of the remaining six bridges as soon as possible.

Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party arrived back in Maei in the evening. — MNA
Again, I cannot help refuting the slanders of the BBC. At 8.15 pm on 25 August 2004, it broadcast a programme under the heading Myanmar and international affairs, in which, it interviewed Larry Jagan, a so-called Myanmar political analyst and U Win Naing, the so-called Myanmar politician.

But what was so clear was that the interview was nothing but wicked and dirty lies. In brief, the interviewees, lacking moral values, slandered the nation-building endeavours being exerted by the leaders of the nation in unity and oneness, while trying to drive a wedge and floating fabrications with every intention of wrecking the National Convention. They even dared to say that there was no progress in the nation-building endeavours being exerted by the leaders, where we watched satellite TV. This was another surprise for me, as I thought that satellite TV was prohibited. But it was everywhere—in private houses, restaurants and in the guesthouse I stayed. People are allowed to watch foreign news, even from the BBC World, which usually criticises the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). When asked to compare reality with the media coverage of Myanmar, Mr Novak, the Czech journalist, said: “A lot of information in the media focuses on the negative aspects, and the bad news usually originates from the areas forbidden for foreigners to visit. Therefore, you can’t really say whether the information is true, distorted or a straight lie.”

What I have stated above is the brief account of the information is true, distorted or a straight lie.”

And now, Larry Jagan and U Win Naing have said that Myanmar is facing harsher economic hardships this year, while failing to see not a single progress due to economic sanctions of some powers imposed on the country. But the causes are different. The difference is that in Myanmar, everyone dressed well, with many wearing the traditional 'longyi', that everyone had a place to live and food to eat.

The Czech journalist also said: “Ordinary people in Burma spoke to me in English. We usually met and approached each other in the restaurants, where we watched satellite TV. This was another surprise for me, as I thought that satellite TV was prohibited. But it was everywhere—in private houses, restaurants and in the guesthouse I stayed. People are allowed to watch foreign news, even from the BBC World, which usually criticises the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).”

In his article, he said that he became interested in Myanmar after reading a number of negative articles that portrayed the atmosphere there as similar to the one he experienced in Czechoslovakia. And when he visited Myanmar he actually experienced in the country did not entirely correspond with the perceptions he had when he entered. He remarked: “From what I read in the press, I had expected difficulties in moving around, a lot of poverty and beggars, and soldiers everywhere. But this perception of Burma was wrong”. He added that he visited Yangon, Mandalay, Bagan, Inlay Lake and that as far as he could see, no one followed him; that he could take many photos of the Myanmar people without any problem.

Mr Novak said that he was a little bit surprised by the openness of the people he spoke to, that he did not see any sign of repression, that Myanmar is a poor country, but not as poor as he expected, that he did not see the same kind of poverty as he experienced in some countries with many beggars asking for money everywhere, that in Myanmar, everyone dressed well, with many wearing the traditional ‘longyi’, that everyone had a place to live and food to eat.

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What I have stated above is the brief account of the real views of the Czech journalist and photographer. And everybody can see the extent of difference between the four ails of some media of the West that are always trying to discredit Myanmar, and the view of an authentic journalist who has seen Myanmar from the right perspective.

And now, Larry Jagan and U Win Naing have said that Myanmar is facing harsher economic hardships this year, while failing to see not a single progress in the political, economic, education and cultural sectors. According to the extent of my knowledge on psychology, the lies themselves later come to think their lies to be true. In other words, they are automatically lying to themselves or suffering from some kind of mental illness because of their own misdeeds.

The people of Myanmar are dutifully performing their task, under the leadership of the Government, while implementing the national goals and objectives for emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed discipline-flourishing democratic nation in line with the seven-point future policy programme of the State. In the political arena, it has achieved success to the degree of reconvening the National Convention, and in the economic sector, not a single Myanmar dies of hunger because of the economic sanctions of some powers imposed on the country just for the sake of a particular political party or individual. No homeless persons die while sleeping on roadside platform because of severe weather condition. For other sectors including the education and cultural sectors, I will not repeat the successes we have achieved.

Plainly speaking, it is true that our country has faced some obstacles in her efforts to make economic progress due to some powers’ economic sanctions, giving democracy and human rights as the excuse, although she can set up economic infrastructures as expected. Are there not economic failures and deep gaps between the rich and the poor in the powers of the West ? But the causes are different. The difference is that our country has faced some delays in economic progress due to economic sanctions of some powers to interfere in her affairs, while they themselves are experiencing economic slowdown and gaps due to their high military expenditure to invade others and shrinking international market and economic relations resulting from their sanctions on others.

We do have some gap between the rich and the poor. But in our country, the poor people earning a sincere living are able to lead a relatively sufficient life. But the real big economic gap lies between the so-called leaders of some political parties and their followers.

Why? Because some of the leaders of the political parties are the persons who are running their own big and strong businesses, while enjoying monthly pensions from the State for their retired high-level government posts. And some are leading a lavish and prosperous life as they are receiving indirect financial assistance as well as clandestine aids from some foreign countries that are giving assistance to them for their self-interest.

However, some of their followers have become ciphers as they have never worked hard, instead they are doing foolish things such as sitting in front of their party office, going to a park, talking rubbish at tea shops and distributing papers every day. But the nation has nothing to do with the economic gap between the party leaders and their followers. It is their own problem. They, the followers of the party leaders, cannot become rich as they have never worked hard to earn money for their family, instead they are leading an uncertain and worthless life.

Now, I will conclude my article. The interview programme aired by the BBC on 25 August at 8.15 pm concerning the Myanmar and international affairs made a slanderous lie, without having consideration for the nation’s objective conditions of the political, economic, education and cultural sectors. Thus, in this case, the BBC is like a person who don’t show his face in public for its foolish lies.

(Translation: TMT)

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Efficient use of electricity

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

There are about 500,000 households using electricity in Yangon. Thus, saving a four-foot fluorescent lamp everyday by each household amounts to saving power that is equal to the capacity a 20-mega-watt power station can supply.
Lt-Gen Ye Myint attends opening ceremony of Myingyan MEB inspects bridges on Yangon-Mandalay Union Highway

YANGON, 19 Sept — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint of the Ministry of Defence inspected construction of Pinchar Bridge and Myitnge Bridge on Yangon-Mandalay Six-lane Union Highway on 17 September after unveiling the signboard of the Myanmar Economic Bank in Myingyan, Mandalay Division.

Accompanied by Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun, Chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council Col Zaw Min, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and departmental officials, Lt-Gen Ye Myint arrived Myingyan of Mandalay Division from Chauk of Magway Division. They were welcomed there by Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Col Thein Naing of the command and senior military officers.

At 2 pm, Lt-Gen Ye Myint and party attended the ceremony to open new building of MEB of the Ministry of Finance and Revenue on Myingyan-Mandalay Road in Ward 2 of Myingyan. Also present on the occasion were local authorities, Manager of the Bank U Mya Phone and staff, students and local people numbering over 3,500.

Speaking on the occasion, the commander said that the new bank building emerged today for uplift the people and the bank, and to carry out banking services in accord with banking procedures and rules and regulations. As such, banking system will improve and it will contribute towards smooth circulation of money so as to enhance economic development of the region. Thus, bank staff are urged to try hard to become themselves highly-qualified ones.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint unveiled the signboard of the new building of Myingyan MEB.

Managing Director Col Hsan Tun of MEB and Secretary of Myingyan District Peace and Development Council Maj Myint Soe cut the ribbon to open the bank building.

Afterwards, Lt-Gen Ye Myint, the commander, the minister and departmental officials viewed round the bank building.

The new building was constructed with the aim of ensuring better banking services and easy contact between the people and the bank. It is 80 feet long and 76 feet wide reinforced concrete two-storey building.

After the opening ceremony, they left Myingyan and saw over condition of Myitha-Minsu-Kyaunkse Road and pulses and beans, kitchen crops and monsoon paddy plantations on both sides of the road.

At 4.30 pm, they arrived at the site of Pinchar Bridge Construction Project on Yangon-Mandalay Six-lane Union Highway in Singaing Township. In the briefing hall, Kyaukse District Engineer U Maung Maung Lwin of Public Works reported on completion of building two piers, two approach structures, pile caps and 42 per cent of building the shaft. Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected construction of the shaft at the piers and approach structures and flow of water in Pinchar Bridge.

Prizes presented to winners of Performing Arts Competitions in Rakhine State

YANGON, 18 Sept — Prize presentation of Rakhine State 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions was held at the U Ottama Hall in Sittway on 11 September.

Vice-Chairman of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Col Than Tun Aung, Secretary of Rakhine State Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Khin Maung Than, Commissioner of Rakhine State U Ye Naing Aung, Chairman of Sittway District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col San Htay, Secretary of District Peace and Development Council Major Tin Hsan and officials presented prizes to winners of the respective competitions.— MNA

Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint welcomes back Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo at the airport.— HEALTH

On arrival at Myitnge River Bridge, they inspected progress of the construction tasks on Kyaunkse bank.

Senior Engineer U Soe Min of Bridge Construction Special Group-12 reported on 57 per cent completion of the bridge. Lt-Gen Ye Myint instructed officials to coordinate tasks among departments concerned in building the highways and attended to the needs. Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint inspected progress in building the bridge and flow of water in Myitnge River.

Myitnge Bridge will be 840 feet long and 80 feet wide and it will be six-lane bridge. The total length of approach roads will be 1,400 feet long.

Accompanied by Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Nay Win and officials, Lt-Gen Ye Myint went to Mandalay General Hospital on 18 September morning. He paid homage to State Ovadaw of Nay Pyi Taw and thus from 180 paniya of Yadanaponsan Monastery at the foot of Mandalay Hill and Nay Pyi Taw’s Medavyabivamsa of Naya Monastery of Phayagyi Taik asked after health of the Sayadaws.

After hearing reports on health conditions of the Sayadaws by Medical Superintendent Dr U Win and officials, Lt-Gen Ye Myint fulfilled the requirements.

Next, Lt-Gen Ye Myint left Mandalay International Airport and arrived back here later in the morning.— MNA

Coord meeting on rice offering ceremony for Pyay Taungtana Tawya monasteries held

YANGON, 19 Sept — The first coordination meeting to hold the 23rd rice offering ceremony for Pyay Taungtana Tawya monasteries in Bago Division (West) was held at the meeting hall of Bago Division (West) Peace and Development Council Office on 9 September. Present were Secretary of Bago Division (West) Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Ohn Myint and members, division, district and township level departmental officials, social organizations and members of the rice offering sub-committee.

Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the Rice Offering Ceremony Secretary of Bago Division (West) PDC Lt-Col Ohn Myint gave a speech. The leading committee and sub-committees were assigned duties to hold the 23rd rice offering ceremony on a grand scale at Sirkhetta Sirindhara Sasana Beikman in Pyay on 13 October.

Rice and provisions will be donated to 1,700 members of the Sangha and student members of the monasteries on the occasion. Those wishing to donate alms may contact Pyay Rice Offering Organization Office, Tel: 053-26222, Chairman U Paw Shwe of the Organization, Tel: 053-22102, Secretary U Myint Swe, Tel: 053-22536 and Executive U Ohn Kyi, Tel: 053-21685.— MNA

Health Dy Minister arrives back

YANGON, 19 Sept — The Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo arrived back here by air yesterday evening after attending the Regional Ministerial Consultation On Maternal and Child Nutrition in Asia held in New Delhi, India, from 15 to 17 September under the programme of the FAO.

Deputy Minister Dr Mya Oo was welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Health Dr Kyaw Myint, directors-general of departments under the ministry, officials, and relatives.

Vice-Chairman of the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association Dr Kyi Soe and Deputy Director (Nutrition) of the Health Department Dr Hla Kyi, who accompanied the deputy minister to India, also arrived back on the same flight.— MNA
Mexico, Japan sign free trade agreement

Mexico City, 18 Sept — Mexico and Japan signed an Economic Association Agreement (EAA) here on Friday aimed at promoting the gradual liberalization of trade between two countries.

The EAA, a free trade agreement, is to take effect on 1 April, 2005, pending approval by parliaments of the two countries.

The agreement aims at removing tariffs on 91 per cent of Mexican exports to Japan and 44 per cent of Japanese exports to Mexico.

Mexican President Vicente Fox and visiting Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi hailed the agreement, saying it opened a new page in the 100-year history of bilateral commercial relations.

Fox said the agreement will “mark the beginning of a new epoch under the impulse of this important instrument that will open a promising horizon to increase trade and investment”. Koizumi said the accord “will be our mutual benefit, and the benefits will be shared with the countries of North America, Central America and even South America”.

The deal is Japan’s second free trade agreement, following the first one with Singapore. Mexico has inked 12 agreements with 43 countries, including the United States and Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement, the European Union, and several Latin American countries.

With the beginning of the EAA, tariffs on Japanese cars will be cut from 50 per cent to 23 per cent.

Japan will also lower import tariffs on Mexico’s 307 agricultural products, including grapes, bananas, onions, peaches and plums in stages of seven, 10 and 15 years.

According to the Mexican Economy Ministry, Mexico exported 605 million US dollars of goods to Japan in 2003 and imported about 7.6 billion US dollars.

China opens web site on agricultural product processing

Beijing, 18 Sept — A government-funded web site on agricultural product processing, www.app.gov.cn., opened here Friday. Sponsored by the Township Enterprises Administration under the Ministry of Agriculture, the web site will provide information on product processing to programmers and consumers.

Designed and maintained by the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Engineering, the web site has 12 pages, focusing on policies, news and technology.

China investing heavily in environmental protection

Qingdao, 18 Sept — China is spending 700 billion yuan (84.3 billion US dollars) in the 2001-2005 period to control pollution and improve environment.

The amount equals to 1.3 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) in the same period, said Wang Yuying, deputy director of the State Environmental Protection Administration, at the Sino-South Korea Forum on Investment and Technology for Environmental Protection which opened Thursday in Qingdao, east China’s Shandong Province.

The funds is being mainly used to improve water and air pollution, solid waste disposal and construction of environmental protection facilities. The emphasis is placed on heavily polluted regions and cities. Environment around the globe is deteriorating in the wake of growing economic and population growth, causing a worldwide concern.

In China, some enterprises discharge huge amounts of pollutants, posing a great threat to environment. The environmental protection sector, a major component of the national economy, has turned into an inter-trade and trans-regional rising industry after a 20-year development. By the end of 2002, people working in this sector exceeded 3.5 million in China.

China gets $311m from ADB

KAMPALA, 18 Sept — The Ugandan Government has got a total of 311 million US dollars from the African Development Bank (ADB) with over 34 per cent of the funds channelled to agriculture and rural development, according to a statement from the ADB.

ADB representative in Uganda Mukaila Ojelade was quoted by local media on Friday as saying that “presently, the ADB portfolio in Uganda comprises 12 active operations, with loans and grants totaling 311 million dollars. Operations in agriculture and rural development focused on strengthening and diversification of production. A dominant share of approvals between 1996 and 2003 went into this”.

He said Uganda occupied an important position with the ADB, in terms of commitments and being the second largest beneficiary of concessional resources from the African Development Fund (ADF), with allocations amounting to 180 million dollars.

The ADF is a concessional lending arm of ADB.

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Tanzania starts HIV vaccine trials next month

DAR ES SALAAM, 18 Sept — Initial trials of a vaccine meant to cope with HIV sub-types prevalent in Tanzania are scheduled to begin next month, local newspaper Daily News reported on Friday.

The first phase of trials is to involve 40 candidates from Sweden and 60 candidates from Tanzania, where the second phase of trials will be carried out next year, the report said.

The initial phase of trials, to be undertaken under the HIV Vaccine Immunogenicity Study, are meant to check the safety and elicit immune response of the generic material to be administered to the candidates, according to Mohammed Bakari, who is leading the vaccination research at the college of health sciences under Tanzania’s Muhimbili University.

In Tanzania, the vaccine will be tried out on volunteers, who will first be administered with DNA and then be given the immunity booster known as MVA 12 days later.

Australian Embassy in Jakarta resumes consular services

JAKARTA, 18 Sept — The Australian Embassy in Jakarta, the target of a car bomb attack last Thursday, announced on Friday that it has resumed emergency consular services for Australians and for visa requests.

Although the embassy remained closed to the public, it has made arrangements for limited consular operation including for passport services, reported The Jakarta Post online news service.

The embassy only handles emergency visa requests, while non-immigration operations remained suspended until further notice, it said.

The heavily fortified embassy building was slightly damaged by a car bomb which exploded just outside. A total of nine people, all Indonesians including several working for the Australian Embassy, died in the attack, and scores of people remained hospitalized with severe injuries.

Several high-rise office buildings near the embassy were heavily damaged.

MNA/Xinhua

A wicker couch floats in a flooded section of Highway 59 on 16 September, 2004 in Gulf Shores, Alabama. —INTERNET

MNA/Xinhua

China — MNA/Xinhua

Uganda — MNA/Xinhua

Tanzania — MNA/Xinhua

Mexico — MNA/Xinhua

ADB — MNA/Xinhua

China — MNA/Xinhua

Australian Embassy in Jakarta — MNA/Xinhua

MNA/Xinhua
UN Chief urges more help for Africa’s development

UNITED NATIONS, 18 Sept — The international community needs to support concerted efforts by African countries to implement a joint plan for development on their continent, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan urged in a new report released on Friday.

“African countries are making considerable progress,” he said in his second report on the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), but added they still needed more aid, debt relief, foreign investment and further help in trade.

The report, which came in response to a General Assembly resolution adopted last December, indicated that the international community did make some progress in their support for the implementation of NEPAD, but largely failed to register a solid impact as con-tradictory donor policies and international trade practices remained un-changed throughout the year. The report showed some increase in aid in the past two years, but noted that the amount is still far below what Africa received more than 20 years ago. In 1990, official development assistance to the region was no less than 26 billion US dollars. Compared to that amount, the continent received only 22.2 billion US dollars in aid in 2002 — an amount almost equivalent to what Africa paid in external debt servicing costs.—MNA/Xinhua

India to enlist Asian nations’ support on OPEC oil price issue

VIENNA, 18 Sept — India will enlist the support of world’s leading oil consumers China, Japan and Korea to pressurize OPEC for removing the premium on the crude oil the oil cartel charges from Asian countries, Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said on Friday.

Of the 18.36 billion US dollars India spent in 2003-04 on importing 90.859 million tons of crude oil to meet its 71 per cent of requirement, over 750 million US dollars was premium. “To this end, India is organizing later this year, in association with the International Energy Forum, a round table discussion in New Delhi between the four principal Asian buyers of crude oil and the six principal Asian exporters,” he said addressing the OPEC ministerial meeting here.

“Charging developing Asia a premium while offering a discount to the developed West is a concept that calls for rectification in the vital area of international trade,” he said.

Later talking to reporters, Aiyar said he met Oil Minister of world’s largest oil producer Saudi Arabia, Ali Al Naimi, and OPEC president Yusgiantoro, on the side-lines of the OPEC conference, to “sensitize” them of the gravity of the issue.

“They have listened to our logic and will be pre-varying a business-like response shortly,” he said.

Aiyar said both Naimi and Yusgiantoro have agreed to attend the round table of major oil consumers and producers, to be held early next year.

In his address to the OPEC assembly, where India was the only non-oil producing Asian country to have been invited, Aiyar said “what we need is a uniform official selling price and significant spot trading of West Asian crude to increase liquidity and establish a genuine and representa-tive market for crude oil for fast-growing Asian market.” The traditional producer benchmark prices, like Brent, Dubai/Oman, should not apply for Asian importers, who should be in-duced to the crude they produce, he said.—MNA/PTI

British Army selling sports shoes

LONDON, 18 Sept — British Army has poked a toe into one of the world’s toughest fields of conflict — selling sports shoes.

The Army is lending its name and insignia to a running shoe, called PT-03, which will do battle in the shops with the sleek and heavily marketed likes of Reebok, Nike and Adidas.

It is the first commercial product to be endorsed by the British Army, whose fitness instructors helped test and design the shoes, and will carry the logo of crossed swords over a crown and lion.

The armed services have been looking to extend their image commercially since 1998, when the Treasury urged government department to examine opportunities such as selling real estate or intellectual property rights.

The Royal Air Force is currently trying to patent its red, white and blue “target” symbol, long a T-shirt favourite. While Nike have Michael Jordan to promote their wear, the British Army has Colonel Phil Watkins.

The 55-year-old head of the Army Physical Training Corps says these running shoes are among the best he has worn in a 40-year Army career which has seen him in comba-tant zones from Malaysia to Northern Ireland.

—MNA/Reuters

Chinese scientists develop new medical robot

BEIJING, 18 Sept — Scientists in northeast China’s Heilongjiang Province have developed two types of robots that can help set bones, perform surgery and conduct medical research, the state media reported on Friday.

Researchers at Harbin University said they have developed two types of the robot: a mainframe built on a wholly-digital platform to carry out medical research and track state-of-the-art technologies of the world, and a smaller system for clinical use.

To date, the smaller robot system has helped perform 21 bone-setting surgeries, all of which were successful, Xinhua news agency reported.

The research group has applied for four patents for the interdisciplinary project that involves robotics, network technologies, computer science, imaging and surgery.

Chinese scientists have also been a major source of inspiration for the world’s robot community. In the 1970s, the first two goats cloned from fresh embryo were born at the university in 1980.

—MNA/Xinhua

African wild cat. The ancient Egyptians put as much care into mummifying their animals as they did to their kings and relatives, according to a study published in the British scientific journal Nature.—INTERNET

Official says no new bird flu case in Malaysia in three days

Kuala Lumpur, 18 Sept — The bird flu outbreak which has hit four districts in north state of Kelantan seems to be under control with no new cases in the past three days, a official said on Friday.

This indicated that the Idros Kadri told reporters department’s efforts to cull fowl in the eight affected villages had shown positive effects, Kelantan Veterinary Services Department Director Dr.

—MNA/Xinhua

Matthew Williams sits on a bench between two New Zealand Fur Seals at Sydney’s Taronga Zoo, Australia, on 15 Sept, 2004.—INTERNET

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Arsenal coach condemns decision to abandon Roma

LONDON, 18 Sept—Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has condemned the decision to abandon AS Roma's Champions League match against Dynamo Kiev after referee Anders Frisk was injured by an object thrown from the stands.

Swede Frisk decided to abandon Wednesday's game in Rome's Olympic Stadium after he was hit on the head when leaving the pitch at halftime with Kiev leading 1-0. Frisk said the Italian club could not guarantee his safety or that of his assistants.

The decision set a "dangerous precedent" and could have provided "a riot outside the stadium", Wenger was quoted as saying in Friday's London Evening Standard newspaper.

Frisk was struck by an object shortly after sending off Roma defender Philippe Mexes for an off-the-ball foul and left the pitch bleeding from a forehead wound.

Fabregas extents contract with Arsenal

LONDON, 18 Sept—Frenes Fabregas has extended his contract with Arsenal, keeping the Spanish teenager at the Premier League's Champions for his "long-term future", the club said on Friday.

The 17-year-old midfielder joined Arsenal a year ago from Barcelona and became the club's youngest ever player and goalscorer last season. Arsenal did not disclose the length of the new deal.

Fabregas, known as Cesc, has made a big impact this season, earning praise for his performances as a replacement for the injured Patrick Vieira in the early games.

"I'm delighted to be pledging my long-term future to Arsenal. My first year here has been like a dream, I never thought I would have the opportunity to play in the first team so early on," he told the Arsenal web site.

Ferguson believes return of Ferdinand triggering improvement

MANCHESTER (England), 18 Sept—Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson believes the return from suspension of Rio Ferdinand will trigger an improvement in his side's defence after a disappointing start to the season.

Ferdinand is available to face Liverpool at Old Trafford on Monday after being given a six-match ban, imposed for missing a drugs test. United have drawn three of their opening five Premier League games and their first Champions League game.

"What I think we need is to get a consistent back four playing again," Ferguson told a news conference on Friday.

"In the 1994 (double-winning) team the back four never changed and last year, up until Rio went away, the back four never changed and we got the results that justifies that continuity.

"That's exactly what we're aiming for now. Over the next few weeks we hope that once Gary Neville comes back, we will get back to playing a regular back four and then you'll see the results will change." United won only seven of their final 16 league games last season once the central defender's suspension started in mid-January. The England international was also suspended 20 matches.

"It's three points, no more," he told a news conference on Friday. "We have to try and win three points and if they come from big club, all the better.

"But I don't want to think about the rivalry because it is important not to feel the pressure and be relaxed.

"A manager needs to be quiet and use his brain, not his spirit. The spirit is for the players.

"Liverpool had a good record at Old Trafford under previous manager Gerard Houllier, winning 1-0 three times in the past four seasons.

Benitez admitted Manchester United would benefit from the return of Rio Ferdinand, if Alex Ferguson starts with the England defender for the first time since the end of his eight-month ban for missing a drugs test.

"If Rio plays, perhaps for them it will be good, but I don't know exactly how he knows and the problems they have now," he said. Asked about United's current slump in form, Benitez said: "A big club like Manchester United can play badly for one or two games, but not consistently badly.

"United, who lie 11th in the table, have endured their worst start to a Premier League season with only six points from their first five games. Liverpool are in eighth position with seven points from four games.—MNA/Reuters

Chiapas sends America crashing to another defeat

MEXICO CITY, 18 Sept—Chiapas sent big-spending America crashing to another defeat in the Mexican championship, increasing the pressure on their beleaguered coach Oscar Ruggeri.

America, who have won only once in five games since the former Argentine defender took over, lost 2-1 and slipped to fifth out of six teams in Group One of the Clausura championship. They are also struggling to make the knock-out stages.

The Eagles were quick in trouble after Mexican international defender Dulito Davino put through his own net in the ninth minute of Wednesday's game at Tuxtla Gutierrez following a corner.

Chiapas went further ahead early in the second half when defender Melvin Brown headed home following another corner.

America had Argentine defender Horacio Ameli sent off for a second bookable offence in the 73rd minute before Aaron Padilla pulled a goal back with 13 minutes to go.

"There's no doubt that I'm responsible for the defeats," said Ruggeri, who played in the 1986, 1990 and 1994 World Cups. "Today, they beat us from dead ball situations." America's two main signings, Claudio Lopez and Djalmimba, both played 45 minutes each.

Brazilian midfielder Djalmimba, who was substituted at halftime in Sunday's home defeat by Puebla, this time started on the bench and came on after the break to replace Argentine international Lopez.

Maradona to return to Cuba on Monday

Havana, 18 Sept—Fallen soccer great Diego Maradona will return to Cuba on Monday to be shut away in a mental clinic for more drug treatment, Argentine diplomats said on Friday.

"Everything is ready for him to arrive on Monday night," an Argentine Embassy official said.

After a Press conference at Havana airport, the 43-year-old former Argentine captain will be confined to Cuba's Centre for Mental Health (CENSAM) until he kicks his cocaine addiction.

He will be accompanied by a sister and his personal doctor Alfredo Cabe.

Maradona has made Cuba his second home in recent years, saying the island offers him respite from the media and fan frenzy in Europe and South America.

But on a visit to Argentina in April, the bloated Maradona was rushed to intensive care with heart problems and his family then forced him to enter a psychiatric clinic.

The family has since given him the go-ahead to return to Cuba for further drug rehabilitation in a closed institution.

Maradona had looked healthier in recent interviews, but photographs taken last week showed his weight had apparently ballooned again.

Last Saturday he was taken to a Buenos Aires hospital for a time with breathing problems, but was then sent back to a drug treatment centre.

Maradona, one of the most gifted players in the history of football who led Argentina to victory at the 1986 World Cup, says he has been fighting drug addiction for much of the last 20 years.

Liverpool coach not distracted by fierce rivalry

LIVERPOOL (England), 18 Sept—Rafael Benitez says he will not be distracted by the fierce rivalry between his Liverpool side and Manchester United when they meet in the Premier League on Monday.

The Spanish coach, in his first season at Anfield, faces his biggest domestic game so far in the Old Trafford contest between the two heavyweight teams.

"I don't want to think about the rivalry because it is important not to feel the pressure and be relaxed," Benitez said: "A big club like Manchester United can play badly for one or two games, but not consistently badly.

"United, who lie 11th in the table, have endured their worst start to a Premier League season with only six points from their first five games. Liverpool are in eighth position with seven points from four games.—MNA/Reuters

Answers for yesterday's crossword puzzle

[MNA/Reuters]

Liverpool defender Steven Finnann races to the ball ahead of Monaco midfielder Pontus Farnerud during their Champions League match at Anfield.—INTERNET

Liverpool defender Steven Finnann races to the ball ahead of Monaco midfielder Pontus Farnerud during their Champions League match at Anfield.—INTERNET
Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Magway Division, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Kayin State and Ayeyawady Division, scattered in Kayah, Rakhine, Mon States, lower Sagaing, Bago, Yangon Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Bay interference: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy in the North Bay and monsoon is weak elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Special features: According to the observations at (06:30) hrs MST today, yesterday’s tropical depression over South China sea has crossed Vietnam Coast and weakened.

Forecast valid until evening of 20-9-2004: Rain will be isolated in Kayah State, Magway, lower Sagaing Divisions, scattered in Kachin, Rakhine States, Mandalay, Bago, Ayeyawady, Yangon Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters. Outlook for subsequent two days: Weak monsoon.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 20-9-2004: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 20-9-2004: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at 11:00 hrs MST on 19-9-2004)

According to the (06:30) hrs MST observations today, the water level of Ayeyawady River at Aunglan is (5) cm above the danger level. Though the water level may rise (50) cm (about 1.5 ft) and fall below the danger level within the next (3) days commencing this morning.
Cash and kind donated to monasteries in Tamway, Mingala Taungnyunt, Ahlon

YANGON, 19 Sept — Families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy and Air) and wellwishers donated cash and kind to 18 monasteries in Tamway and Mingala Taungnyunt Townships, Yangon East District, at a ceremony held at Sasana Jeyamangala Pariyatti Monastery in Natchaung Ward, Tamway Township, this afternoon. State Peace and Development Council Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein attended the ceremony and offered provisions to Sayadaws.

Also present on the occasion were Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman Yagon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Hta, Deputy Minister for Religious Affairs Brig-Gen Thura Aung Ko, Vice-Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, senior military officers of the Ministry of Defence, local authorities, and wellwishers.

At first, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein and party and wellwishers received the Eight Precepts of Defence, local authorities, and wellwishers. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party presented provisions to Sayadaws.

Maj-Gen Aung Thein of the Ministry of Defence, accompanied by Rakhine and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party proceeded to Maei-Minyaung road section of Yangon-Kyaung Road Project. At the briefing hall, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Than Nyunt of Public Works reported on progress of Maei-Minyaung Road Section and tasks being carried out. Later, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected building of road at milepost No 8/1 and at Maei-Minyaung-Pamnetenau road section with the use of geotextile technique. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party arrived at Londawpauk Bridge construction in An Township and discussed with officials on timely completion of work meeting the set-standard and attended to the needs. Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected the project site.

(Check page 9)

Use Natural Gas Vehicles and save fuel oil

- In automobiles, natural gas can be used in place of petrol and diesel.
- The use of natural gas can not only save fuel oil but also extend engine life.
- Natural gas exploited at home can be used effectively and safely.
- Natural gas burns cent per cent and is environment-friendly.
- Adequate supply of natural gas helps facilitate passenger and cargo transport.

Roads, bridges construction work on Yangon-Kyaung Road Project Inspected

Yangon, 19 Sept — Member of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party proceeded to Maei-Minkaung road section of Yangon-Kyaung Highway Project. At the briefing hall, Deputy Superintending Engineer U Than Nyunt of Public Works reported on progress of Maei-Minkaung Road Section and tasks being carried out. Later, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected building of road at milepost No 8/1 and at Maei-Minkaung-Pamnetenau road section with the use of geotextile technique. Afterwards, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party arrived at Londawpauk Bridge construction in An Township and discussed with officials on timely completion of work meeting the set-standard and attended to the needs. Next, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than and party inspected the project site.

(Check page 9)