Wataya wood-based industrial zone is now thriving. Both the government and the national entrepreneurs can gain benefit from the sale of finished wood products at higher prices.

YANGON, 2 Oct — Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt inspected factories at Wataya wood-based industrial zone and those in Shwepyitha, Hlinethaya and Shwelinpan industrial zones today.

At 9.30 am, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt arrived at Wataya wood-based industrial zone operated by Myanma Timber Enterprise of the Ministry of Forestry in Wataya village, Shwepyitha Township. The Prime Minister was welcomed there by Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, the ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy ministers, departmental heads, industrialists and officials. At the briefing hall of the No 9 Saw Mill, Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung reported to the Prime Minister and party on the purpose of the establishment of the wood-based industrial zone, conditions of saw mills in the zone, wood-based factories, container yard, local and foreign investment, staff quarters, etc.

To keep saw mills together in exclusive and spacious areas and to ensure smooth and convenient administration, Wataya area is designated as a wood-based industrial zone. Moreover, the government is also giving encouragement to the establishment of industrial zones where State-owned saw mills and wood-based factories as well as private-owned wood-based value-added industries can thrive.

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

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

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

Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
To serve mutual interest between Myanmar and PRC

The Union of Myanmar and the People's Republic of China have maintained Paukphaw fraternal nations. Myanmar is meeting with success in its cooperation with China not only in economic area but also in all other areas. There have been agreements, MoU and exchange of notes, which were signed during the exchange of goodwill visits of the leaders of the two nations. The exchange of goodwill visits of the leaders of the two nations in the course of history has been able to ensure mutual interest between the two nations.

Recently, the Myanmar goodwill delegation led by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt paid a goodwill visit to the People's Republic of China and held discussions on mutual interest in political and economic sectors. After the goodwill visit, continued efforts are being made for ensuring mutual interest between the two nations.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt attended coordination meeting on implementing Myanmar-China agreements and all-round cooperation held at Zeyathiri Beikman on Kommyinttha on 1 October and delivered an address.

In his address, he said Myanmar has constantly supported and practiced One China Policy, while China has stood by Myanmar in regional and international affairs many times. The diplomatic ties established between Myanmar and the PRC have turned 50 years, and the two nations have achieved success constantly in regional and international affairs many times. The development ties established between the two countries have been upgraded to fraternal relations.

With progress of bilateral goodwill and mutual cooperation, the two nations have intensified exchanges of goodwill visits of State leaders of the two sides, thereby contributing to mutual interest between the two nations.

Under such circumstances, the ministries concerned are to make relentless efforts for successful realization of agreements, MoU and exchange of notes of the two countries.

Nowadays, mutual cooperation between the two nations is making progress in 29 sectors and continued efforts are to be made for successful realization of each sector.

Therefore, we would like to call on the ministries concerned to make concerted efforts for successful realization of tasks being carried out based on understanding for serving the mutual interest between the two countries.
Indonesia seeks release of women hostages in Iraq

Jakarta, 1 Oct — Jakarta was preparing a crisis team to try to secure the release of two Indonesian women seized by Islamic militants in Iraq but said it had made no decision on whether it would negotiate with kidnappers.

Foreign ministry spokesman Marty Natalegawa said Rosidah binti Amin and Rafikan binti Amin, who were working for a British company, had been captured by a group calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq.

The group, which appears to be an offshoot of another group which has been holding two French journalists since August 20, has not made any ransom or political demands to Indonesia, he said.

“There is a possibility for a ransom ... we will not foreclose such possibilities and we will make a decision when that demand is made,” he told a press conference.

The women, employed by British electronics company G-Bell, were being held “most likely” because of their employer and not because of Indonesia’s political stance or role in the Iraq conflict, Natalegawa said.

“We do not have troops in Iraq and our political position on Iraq has been known for some time in expressing our concerns about developments there and in denouncing and condemning the aggression against Iraq,” he said.

Chinese companies issue statement protesting US sanctions

Beijing, 1 Oct — Two Chinese companies, namely the China New Era Group and China Xinshidai Company, issued a statement on Thursday, protesting unjustified sanctions by the United States.

The US Government imposed sanctions on 21 September, 2004 against China Xinshidai Company and China New Era Group, alleging that it spread WMD-capable missile technology to some countries, which is “totally groundless”, the statement said.

“We hereby express our strong opposition and condemnation of such outrageous and unjustified behaviours of the US Government,” it said.

The China Xinshidai Company is a state-owned enterprise legally registered and operated in China. For over ten years, the company operated various businesses including trade of conventional and general products of China’s defence industries in strict conformity to laws and regulations of China and developed businesses in many counties and regions of the world, the statement said.

“We deeply understand that the prosperity of the world requires peaceful and stable international political and economic environment, and firmly support the policy of Chinese Government on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, and strictly comply with the Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Export Control of Missile and Missile-Related Items and technology as well as its Export Control list in our trade with foreign countries,” it said.

“We believe the sanction against China Xinshidai Company and China New Era Group in the unwarranted name by the US Government with no evidence is vilification and circumvention to Chinese enterprises; it was a great mistake and completely groundless,” it said.

French MP says US forces thwart mission to rescue French hostages in Iraq

Damascus, 1 Oct — A French lawmaker said that US forces had torpedoed his mission to secure the release of two French journalists held in Iraq, leaving six Iraqi security guards dead in one incident.

It was not immediately clear when the six were allegedly killed, and the US military in Baghdad immediately rejected the accusation.

Didier Julia, a lawmaker for President Jacques Chirac’s ruling party, said his assistant Philippe Brett had persuaded the kidnappers to release Georges Malbrunot and Christian Chesnot, who were abducted near Baghdad on 20 August with their Syrian driver.

They had left in two separate convoys from their place of detention and headed for the Syrian border, he said at a press conference in the Syrian capital Damascus. Both convoys came under US fire, he said.

“They (the US military) set up 20 roadblocks and ... six members of the team protecting the journalists were killed,” said Julia, whose mission enjoys no backing from the French foreign ministry.

He said the six killed were Iraqi “guards” providing security for the journalists, adding that five houses where they lived were destroyed by coalition bombardments. He did not give details on the locations of the alleged incidents.

“The American forces absolutely want to eliminate the people who are protecting them (the hostages),” Julia said.

Julia said Brett had learnt of one last incident which prevented the journalists and their guards from pursuing their way to Syria as soon as he arrived separately at the Syrian border and headed straight back to the journalists’ captors.

“The three Frenchmen are still in Iraq in the hands of the resistance,” he said.

The US military in Baghdad rejected Julia’s accusations.

“I’d say that none of that is true ... I have not seen any reports that would indicate any of these stories showing up are accurate or true,” said senior spokesman Rear Admiral Greg Slavonic.

Julia, 70, is vice president of the Iraqi-French Friendship Group and an Arabic-speaker with ties to the Middle East.

A guerrilla group calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq is believed to be holding the two French journalists.

French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin said earlier Friday that the latest reports about the journalists were “not complete” and expressed caution but also hoped they would be freed soon.

The comments came after Brett, the French lawmaker’s assistant, told a radio station he was in Iraq with the detained reporters, and said he expected to be able to announce their release within hours.

French officials have publicly distanced themselves from Julia and Brett.

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FM says Cuba will defeat US eco blockade

HAVANA, 1 Oct — Cuban Foreign Minister Felipe Perez said Thursday that his country will defeat the decades-old economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States.

Cuba has lost some $80 billion US dollars owing to this “brutal policy” of the United States, Perez told reporters.

It is the longest blockade in history, which has survived 10 consecutive US Administrations, he said, adding that it is the main obstacle to the Caribbean country’s economic and social development. In that sense, the blockade is tantamount to genocide, he said. Seven out of 10 Cubans have been born and lived under the blockade.

Perez noted, however, that within the United States there is growing opposition to the blockade. He said 50 delegations from the United States, including nine congressmen, two senators and two vice-governors, visited Cuba this year.

He added that the US Congress has recently amended legislation on the removal of restrictions on the trips of Cuban-Americans to the island.

At the Press conference, Perez also presented a report of his country, entitled “The Need to End the Economic, Commercial and Financial Blockade Imposed by the United States Against Cuba”, which will be delivered to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for a debate in the United Nations on October 28. It is Cuba’s 13th report calling on an end to the US blockade. — MNA/Xinhua

Malaysian official calls for enhanced patrols in Malacca Straits

KUALA LUMPUR, 1 Oct — Malaysian and Indonesian police have been urged to step up joint patrols in Malacca Straits in efforts to curb crimes in the waterway, one of the world’s busiest routes for merchant vessels.

The call was made by Malaysian Deputy Director for Internal Security and Public Order Abdul Halim in his written speech at the launch of the 23rd joint exercise by Malaysian and Indonesian police in Langkawi, north Malaysia, on Wednesday.

His speech was read out by Kedah State Police Chief Supian Amat.

Abdul Halim said attention must be given to the straits as incidents like piracy, explosive and drug smuggling, and thefts of underwater treasures kept recurring. “Looking at the situation, it is important for both countries to intensify joint patrols and to hold regular meetings to exchange latest information on security along the straits,” he added.

Abdul Halim said the joint exercise was important to ensure peace and comfort for all maritime communities.

“The objective of the exercise is to reinforce confidence of the international community that the route is safe,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Oil discovered in northeast Brazil

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1 Oct — Brazil’s state-run petroleum company PETROBRAS on Thursday announced the discovery of excellent-quality oil in the northeast of the country.

Oil was found in a region known as Reconcavo Bahiano, in the Bahia State.

A second prospecting revealed the existence of a sedimentary-rock formation of moderate granulation, at the depth of 800 metres, with 27 metres of thickness damped with petroleum. In order to determine the exact reserve volume, more prospecting is needed.

“In addition to the fact that this oil is of excellent quality, the discovery vindicates the right decision taken by PETROBRAS of returning to explore the basins already under exploitation,” the PETROBRAS said in a statement.

The first prospecting effort in the same region produced negative results.

But the second one, exactly in the same spot but with a tilted drill, found the new reserve. — MNA/Xinhua

Freed Italian hostage says Iraq guerrillas ‘justified’

ROME, 1 Oct — An Italian aid worker held hostage last month in Iraq said guerrillas there were right to fight US-led forces and their Iraqi “puppet government.”

In comments that were bound to annoy Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi’s government, Simona Torretta also called on Rome to withdraw the troops it sent to Iraq to support its US ally.

“I said it before the kidnapping and I repeat it today,” she told Corriere della Sera newsspaper in an interview published Friday. “You have to distinguish between terrorism and resistance. The guerrilla war is justified, but I am against the kidnapping of civilians.”

Torretta and her Italian colleague Simona Pari, both of them 29, were freed Tuesday, three weeks after being snatched from their Baghdad office. Berlusconi has brushed aside widespread reports that his government paid a ransom of up to $1 million.

Describing the administration of Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi as “a puppet government in the hands of the Americans,” Torretta said elections planned for January would have no legitimacy: “During my days in detention ... I came to the conclusion it will take decades to put Iraq back on its feet.”

Torretta, who lived in Iraq before, during and after the US-led invasion, said she wanted to return despite her ordeal — but would not do so as long as US troops were there: “I’ve got to wait until the end of the US occupation,” she said.

She said she did know whether Italy bought her freedom from the kidnappers: “If a ransom was paid then I am very sorry. But I know nothing about it ... I believe that (the kidnappers) were a very political, religious group and that in the end they were convinced that we were not enemies.” — Internet

S-E Asian nations seek early lead in race to succeed UNSG post

UNITED NATIONS, 1 Oct — Southeast Asian nations sought an early lead in the race to succeed UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, proposing Thailand’s Foreign Minister as their candidate, diplomats said on Wednesday.

Surakiart Sathirathai was endorsed by the Association of South-East Asian Nations at a gathering of ASEAN foreign ministers at UN Headquarters, the diplomats said. Annan has completed just over half of his second five-year term as Secretary-General, which runs out at the end of 2006. He has made clear that he does not want a third term.

But the jockeying to succeed him has begun, with Teheran putting forward the name of Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, Shashi Tharoor, an Indian and the UN Undersecretary-General for public information, also mentioned as a candidate.

While the field remains wide open, many at the United Nations say that it is Asia’s turn to take the helm at the organization of 191 nations, Annan comes from Ghana and his predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali is Egyptian.

“It is Asia’s turn,” said Philippines Ambassador Lauro Baja. Traditionally, nominations for the Secretary-General post originate with the various regional grouping. The 15-nation Security Council then settles on a single name and forwards it to the 191-nation General Assembly, which conducts the final vote.

ASEAN is a 10-nation regional grouping whose members — Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam — have a total population of about 500 million people.

But ASEAN represents only a part of the Asian regional grouping at the United Nations, which comprises 56 nations that are free to embrace the Thai Foreign Minister or put forward other candidates. — MNA/Reuters
Bush, Kerry clash over Iraq war in first debate

WASHINGTON, 1 Oct — US President George W Bush and his Democrat rival John Kerry clashed over the war in Iraq on Thursday in their first face-to-face debate, which has the potential to tip the race for the White House.

Kerry accused Bush of diverting attention from the war on terrorism by launching the war in Iraq, while Bush insisted that the world is safer by the removal of Saddam Hussein.

“I will hunt down and kill the terrorists wherever they are. But we also have to be smart,” Kerry said at the debate at the University of Miami in Florida. He said, “And smart means not diverting your attention from the real war on terror in Afghanistan against Osama bin Laden and taking it off to Iraq.”

“This President has made, I regret to say, a colossal error of judgment. And judgment is what we look for in the President of the United States of America,” he noted.

Bush contended that Kerry looked at the same intelligence in 2002 and concluded that Iraq president Saddam Hussein posed a grave threat. “I agree with him,” he said. “The world is better off without Saddam Hussein.”

He accused Kerry of sending wrong signals with shifting positions on Iraq. “He voted to authorize the use of force and now says it’s the wrong war at the wrong time. … I don’t think you can lead if you say wrong war, wrong time, wrong place. What message does that send to our troops?” Bush said.

The 90-minute nationally televised encounter, which started at 9 pm (0100 GMT Friday), focused on foreign policy and security. The Iraq war dominated the debate.

The debate was one of the three debates in a two-week period. The debates offer the best opportunities, and maybe the last chances also, for the candidates to reach out to undecided voters before the 2 November voting.

Recent polls showed that up to 61 per cent of the 200 million potential voters expect to watch the debates. Some 29 per cent say the debates could influence their voting choice.

Bush is leading Kerry by 6-8 percentage points in various polls just days before the debate, which was held less than five weeks until the election.

India targets $10b trade with Germany

NEW DELHI, 1 Oct — Indian Commerce and Industry Minister Kamal Nath said Wednesday India aims to almost double its annual bilateral trade with Germany to 10 billion US dollars by the next fiscal.

India currently exports merchandise worth about 2.5 billion US dollars to Germany, while imports stand at 3 billion US dollars a year.

Nath said the knowledge economy — including biotechnology, IT and entertainment — was an important area for both countries and called for mutual taping of synergies that existed in these industries.

He highlighted the fact that German firms were well known globally for their technical and engineering excellence. If this is combined with German investment, he said, there would be tremendous scope for cooperation in infrastructure, roads, ports and energy. It provides a win-win situation. The very investment increases trade, and the results of that investment also increases trade.

Carter criticizes Bush Administration over Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 1 Oct — Former US President Jimmy Carter on Thursday criticized the Bush Administration over the Iraq war and said the war has been unnecessary.

“It was false to state that Saddam Hussein had a vast store of weapons of mass destruction or that Iraq was a threat to the security of the United States,” Carter, who turns 80 on 1 October, said in an interview with NBC’s Today programme.

“The war has been unnecessary,” Carter said, adding that Iraq had become a quagmire for the United States.

“I think we have reached a point in Iraq that it has become a quagmire, very similar to what we experienced in Vietnam. There is no real extrication for us to accomplish the goals that we had when we went in,” Carter said.

Carter said the violence in Iraq “is directly attributable to the fact that US forces are there and there is no clear concept at any early stage of when they will be withdrawn”.

Currently there are about 140,000 US troops and some 22,000 multinational forces in Iraq.

“I personally do not believe we are going to be ready for the election in January, but I think we should go through the election and then withdraw American troops as rapidly as possible as soon as there is some tangible semblance of a democratic government in Iraq,” Carter said.

Carter, a former Democrat president, has accused the Bush Administration of misleading the American public over the Iraq war.

Released Iranian diplomat arrives in Teheran

TEHERAN, 1 Oct — Fereydoun Jahani, an Iranian diplomat who was kidnapped in Iraq in August and released on Monday, arrived in Teheran Wednesday, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Upon his arrival, Jahani confirmed that the kidnappers call themselves the Islamic Army in Iraq.

“At first I was mistreated after being arrested, but later the captors changed their attitude towards me,” Jahani said.

Rebutting the claim made by some media that he was not a diplomat, Jahani stressed that he entered Iraq legally and was holding a diplomatic passport.

“I was a diplomat and was appointed as Iran’s consul to Iraq and entered the country as a diplomat,” he said. In reaction to a question on the kidnappers’ demands, Jahani said that they called for release of the Iraqi prisoners of war at first.

“However, they soon realized that there are no more Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran,” Jahani added.

“In fact, time played a crucial role in my release, given they turned out to confirm that I was a diplomat and Iran’s consul to Iraq,” Jahani concluded.

Jahani was kidnapped on August 4 on the way to Karbala from Baghdad to open a consular in the central Iraqi city. The kidnappers accused him of provoking sectarian conflicts and violating his diplomatic duties.

Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Monday in a statement that Jahani’s release should owe to the continuous efforts by the Foreign Ministry, Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi and the Iranian Embassy to Baghdad, along with close cooperation of high-ranking Iraqi officials.

US troops experience deadly September in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 1 Oct — With at least 76 soldiers killed in September, US troops have experienced one of the deadliest month in the 18-month-old war in Iraq, a casualty count released by the Pentagon Thursday showed. The highest monthly causality suffered by the US troops in Iraq came this April with 135 soldiers killed, followed by 82 deaths in November 2003 and 80 deaths last May.

The accumulative US military deaths in Iraq passed the psychologically-important milestone of 1,000 on 7 September and climbed further to 1,052 in Pentagon’s latest tally released on Thursday.

Two Iraqi women inquire about their brother from a newly released Abu Ghraib inmate in the Amiriya district of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, on 30 Sept, 2004. — INTERNET

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Iraq debate dominates last day of British Labour’s conf

LONDON, 1 Oct — The debate on whether British troops should be brought home early from Iraq will dominate the last day of the ruling Labour Party’s conference Thursday as Prime Minister Tony Blair is under new fire on the issue.

A statement by Labour’s National Executive Committee will be read out calling for Blair to announce an early date for the withdrawal of British troops from Iraq. It will then be discussed by Labour local delegates and union members in Brighton, southern England.

The motion cites serious losses suffered by British and US forces and mentions the fact that the Iraq Survey Group failed to find weapons of mass destruction, local media said.

If passed, such a motion would not bind the Blair government in any way, but it would amount to a public humiliation for a Prime Minister aiming to win a third term in office at a general election expected in mid-2005.

Meanwhile, the main opposition Tory leader, Michael Howard for the first time accused Blair of lying over the build-up to war in Iraq.

In an interview with the New Statesman magazine, Howard said the war on Saddam Hussein had led to a huge loss of trust in Blair’s government.

“I think people hold the view pretty firmly now that they had lied to the public over Iraq,” he said.

Pressed on whether he thought Blair had personally lied to the public over Iraq, Howard replied: “Yes.”

Iraq forces attack Fallujah target, killing at least three

Baghdad, 1 Oct — US aircraft waged “precision strike” on a suspect hideout of al-Qaeda-linked Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi in the restive Iraqi city of Fallujah on Thursday, killing three people and wounding eight others, the US military said.

Meanwhile, Abdul-Rahman al-Isawi, a local resident told Xinhua that three people were killed and eight others wounded in the attack.

He said that two houses were levelled and four others were badly damaged.

The airstrike took place around 5.00 am (0100 GMT), targeting a house allegedly used by followers of Zarqawi, the terror mastermind who launches attacks against US-led forces and Iraqi citizens, the military said in a statement.

“Several intelligence sources reported that Zarqawi terrorists were using the safe house at the time of the strike,” the statement said.

US admin officials say contracts in Iraq can take over a year

Miami, 1 Oct — Despite US President George W Bush’s promise to spend nine billion US dollars on reconstruction contracts in Iraq in coming months, administration and congressional officials said on Thursday it could take more than a year to pay out that much money.

With reconstruction held up by an intensifying insurgency, the administration has faced criticism over the slow pace of spending. Just 1.2 billion US dollars has been paid out of the 18.4 billion US dollars Bush asked Congress to rush through last year.

Bush sought to counter the criticism last week by promising that over nine billion US dollars has been paid out of the 18.4 billion US dollars figure, saying there has been reaction skeptically to Bush’s nine billion US dollars estimate.

Congressional aides in both parties have reacted skeptically to Bush’s nine billion US dollars figure, saying there was no way to spend that much money that quickly given the violence in Iraq. On Thursday, as Bush prepared to debate Democratic presidential candidate Senator John Kerry in Miami on security issues, including Iraq and the war on terror, White House officials sought to clarify the nine billion US dollars estimate.

The officials said Bush was not talking about actual spending for work on projects themselves. Rather, they said, he was referring to the amount of money that had been “obligated” to contracts.

The figure promised by Bush included seven billion US dollars already under contract but not yet spent on the ground, officials said. A further two billion US dollars’ worth of contracts would be added within the next several months.

Spending the full nine billion US dollars on the ground in Iraq will take anywhere from 15 to 30 months, based on congressional and administration estimates.

“The tendency to exaggerate is great. The war isn’t going the way people said it would go,” said Donald Abenheim, a war historian and an expert on defence matters at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

A draft US Agency for International Development Reconstruction plan, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters, showed US funding in support of upcoming Iraqi elections, scheduled for January, had not been disbursed as of 1 September. Likewise, only a fraction of the US funding earmarked for education, the Ministry of Health and economic development programmes had actually been spent.

Iraqi men inspect a crater, following a US bombardment in the town of Fallujah, on 30 Sept, 2004. —INTERNET

Al-Jazeera shows militants with ten hostages in Iraq

Baghdad, 1 Oct — The pan-Arab al-Jazeera TV channel showed a videotape Thursday of 10 hostages held by Islamic militants in Iraq.

An extremist Islamic group calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq seized the 10 hostages, including six Iraqis, two Lebanese and two Indonesian women, the Qatar-based channel reported.

“The Islamic Army in Iraq has kidnapped along with a group of others that included women,” a senior Iraqi Interior Ministry official said, adding that “an intelligence team has begun looking into it and trying to find them.”

The same group claimed responsibility for kidnapping two French journalists last month.

The Frenchmen, Christian Chesnot and Georges Malbranot, disappeared on 20 August, along with their Syrian driver, on the way to the southern Iraqi city of Najaf.

Over 140 foreigners have been kidnapped in Iraq by different groups, some holding them for ransom while others have set political conditions for their release. At least 26 hostages have been executed.
Seven-point Road Map should not be opposed

Aung Moe San

(Continued from yesterday)

3. Do they oppose the 104 basic principles laid down by the National Convention that began in 1993?

The 104 basic principles have been approved and laid down by the National Convention, representing the entire nation. They serve as the historic accord representing all the people of the nation. All the eight categories of delegates — (1) delegates of political parties; (2) delegates of representatives-elect; (3) delegates of national races; (4) delegates of peasants; (5) delegates of workers; (6) delegates of intellectuals and intelligentsia; (7) delegates of State service personnel; and (8) other invited delegates, on behalf of the entire nation, have made the unanimous decision to approve and lay down the 104 basic principles of the National Convention, which have been held in accord with the six objectives — (a) non-disintegration of the Union: (b) non-disintegration of national solidarity: (c) perpetuity of sovereignty: (d) flourishing of a genuine multiparty democratic system: (e) further burgeoning of the noblest and worthiest of worldly values such as justice, liberty and equality; and (f) the Tatmadaw to be able to participate in the national political leadership role of the future State. The 104 basic principles will always serve as the cornerstone of the National Convention. Representatives of all the legally existing political parties including those who failed to attend the National Convention at present, also agreed to the basic principles together with all other delegates. They are absent from the National Convention at present, although they have been invited. So, we can say that the basic principles are acceptable for them also.

4. Do they oppose the National Convention sticking to the view that the Tatmadaw held it unilaterally without any coordination with national parties?

In fact, in 1992, valid political parties, representatives-elect, and the officials who were assigned duties by the State held a coordination meeting to convene the National Convention. The Government launched measures to convene the National Convention after issuing Notification No 11/92 on 24 April 1992. The Government issued Order No 9/1992 on 28 May 1992 to coordinate matters for the National Convention, and it held a coordination meeting at the Presidential House on Ahtlene Road on 23 June 1992. A total of 15 delegates from the National League for Democracy, six from Shan National League for Democracy, three from National Unity Party, one from Union Pa'O National Organization, one from Mro (or) Khami National Solidarity Organization, one from Shan State Kokang Democratic Party and one from Lahu National Development Party attended the meeting.

The Government formed the Leading Committee to hold Coordination Meeting for the National Convention under the Order No 35/92 dated 28 May 1992. The representatives from political parties invited by the Leading Committee launched their discussions for holding the National Convention beginning from 23 June 1992. Present at the meeting were 29 delegates from political parties and 15 members of the Leading Committee. They continued their talks on 30 June and 10 July 1992. The Chairman of the Leading Committee hosted a dinner to the delegates in their honour on 10 July 1992, on which the meeting completed successfully. The Head of State graced the occasion with his presence. The meeting reached agreement to make the representatives into eight groups, to fix methods to choose representatives and to lay down objectives of the National Convention. So, it is crystal clear that the National Convention was held through several coordination meetings of political parties and representatives-elect, not through one-sided action of the Tatmadaw. If some political parties put all the blame on and oppose the Government, it will be further away from national reconsolidation.

It is crystal clear that the National Convention was held through several coordination meetings of political parties and representatives-elect, not through one-sided action of the Tatmadaw. If some political parties put all the blame on and oppose the Government, it will be further away from national reconsolidation.

The purpose of the 1990 election was just to frame the State Constitution, but not to call the Hluttaw and form a government.

The British colonialists granted independence to Myanmar only after she had written the State Constitution of the opinion that a country would not deserve to regain its lost-independence without a Constitution. Even the British colonialists practised such policy.

The existing government held the election in 1990 for emergence of the State Constitution. Some political parties winning the majority of votes made demands for immediate call of the Hluttaw and handing over the State power to the victorious party, instead of taking steps for drafting a constitution, ensuring national reconsolidation and flourishing of democracy at home. In that end, the Government had to hold the National Convention for drawing of the State Constitution through coordination with the parties and national parties whose representatives made up the majority of the candidates. It was because the Government paid the top priority to emergence of the new State Constitution, one of the four political objectives.

However, the NLD representatives walked out of the National Convention and as a result, the National Convention was adjourned temporarily. Now, the National Convention is in process of being held in line with the State’s seven-point policy programme.

At present, the State Constitution is going to be drafted in conformity with the basic principles and detailed basic principles that will be adopted at the National Convention. The State Constitution (draft) will be approved through a referendum. Then, free and fair elections will be held for forming Hluttaws (legislative bodies) in accord with the new State Constitution. Meetings of Hluttaws will be held with Hluttaw members in accord with the new State Constitution. And a modern developed democratic nation will be built with State leaders elected by the Hluttaw, and the government and organs of power formed by Hluttaws.

These points are steps to transform the nation into a democratic one in accordance with the State’s seven-point policy programme, and therefore, I would say nobody should oppose the State’s seven-point future policy programme.

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.
National entrepreneurs will...

(From page 1) supply of electricity, construction of asphalt road in the zone, preventive measures against inundation, construction of a jetty, mobile saw mills, arrangements for construction of private-owned factories, and supply of raw materials to factories.

Next, Director-General of the Department of Human Settlement and development tasks, progress of reclamation of 334 plots at the zone, construction of a concrete road and an earth road, reclamation of 226 land plots, and progress of construction of a basic primary school, a hospital, a dispensary and a reading centre. Myanmar Timber Entrepreneurs’ Association Chairman U Aung Lwin and Vice-Chairman U Hein Win, U Teza of Htoo Trading Co Ltd, U Than Huy of TKK Co Ltd and Htein Win, U Teza of Htoo and party went to No-7 furniture factory of Myanma Timber Enterprise and inspected the functions of the mill.

To keep saw mills together in exclusive and spacious areas and to ensure smooth and convenient administration, Wataya area is designated as a wood-based industrial zone. Moreover, the government is also giving encouragement to the establishment of industrial zones where State-owned saw mills and wood-based factories as well as private-owned wood-based value-added industries can thrive.

All the basic requirements, for instance, construction of roads, supply of water, electricity and raw materials, have been provided for these vast zones. Thanks to the assistance provided by the government, Wataya wood-based industrial zone is now thriving.

The Union of Myanmar is blessed with teak and other valuable forest resources. Some of foreign exchange essential for nation-building tasks comes from timber export. In this process, both the government and the national entrepreneurs can gain benefit from the sale of finished wood products at higher prices. With this in view, the government is offering all kinds of assistance to wood-based industries.

It is necessary for the entrepreneurs to produce wood-based products which have ready world’s market on a greater scale, to secure reasonable prices, to pay taxes correctly, and to install more high-tech machinery in their factories.

At this opportune time, national entrepreneurs who are making concerted and continued efforts in all sincerity will enjoy fruitful results from their commitment.

Later, Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt called for sustained efforts for the success of industrial zones, pledging that the government on its part will continue to fulfill the requirements.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt and party proceeded to No 3 Saw Mill of Myanma Timber Enterprise at Wataya wood-based industrial zone and inspected the functions of the mill.

The Prime Minister and party also looked into the chosen site for the extension of the mill. The mill produces 120 tons of value-added sawn timber monthly.

The Prime Minister and party went to No-7 furniture factory of Myanma Timber Enterprise in Wataya wood-based industrial zone where they inspected production process and installation of machinery.
Country produces CNG engines in Hilux cars and arrangements for installation of CNG engines in 10-wheel trucks. Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win left necessary instructions.

The Secretary-1 and party went to Shwethaya Motor Co Ltd in Hlinethaya Industrial Zone. They viewed the production of 14-ton ten-wheel vehicle and its production process. They were conducted round by Managing Director U Khin Maung Hsan. They also inspected installation of CNG kits. The Secretary-1 and party inspected preparations for installation of CNG kits in passenger buses of Parami Bus Line and CNG engine-used saloons and T-2000 light trucks.

In meeting with officials and entrepreneurs who are engaged in production of CNG engine-used cars, the Secretary-1 said he came to fulfill the requirements for installation of CNG kits. The price of fuel is soaring and the country produces sufficient natural gas from inland regions and off-shore. The use of CNG engine instead of petrol and diesel engines is very appropriate at present, he added.

The use of CNG cars is not new in the country and such cars could be used safely, he said.

He said the petrol engine is being substituted with CNG engine by Ministry of Energy and diesel engine by Ministry of Industry. Installation of CNG engines is also being undertaken by the Ministry of Rail Transportation and private entrepreneurs, he said.

This work has to be carried out by private entrepreneurs under the supervision of ministries concerned with the assistance of the government, he said.

The Ministry of Energy is making arrangements to open filling points in necessary places. He urged the entrepreneurs to make efforts for installation of low-cost CNG engines. — MNA
Perfect 10 (or a foreigner’s visit to Myanmar)

(With a contribution by Tim Pile in 28/9-2004 (issue of South China Morning Post of Hong Kong.)

1. Yangon
To most people when they first arrive, Myanmar’s capital city feels low-key and leafy. Apart from shady streets of evergreen trees, Yangon is best known for its sparkling array of temples. The most magnificent is the 2,500-year-old Shwedagon Pagoda, which is usually visible as your plane makes its final descent. Sule Pagoda is a 46-metre landmark in the city centre that radiates a calmness inside at odds with the snarling gridlock outside. If you start to feel “tempted” spend a morning at the National Museum, take in the giant Bogyoke Market and visit other places at the Strand Hotel, renovated in 1993 to recapture the essence of its halcyon days in the 1920s.

2. Scuba Diving at Myeik
In the far south of Myanmar lies the pristine Myeik Archipelago, comprising more than 800 undeveloped islands. Formerly closed to foreigners, this region of untouched white beaches, crystal waters and sea gypsies offers huge untapped potential for scuba diving. Live-aboard charter boats from Thailand are the best way to explore the region. Dive sites are scattered across an area of 26,000 sq. km, and a seven-day circuit is needed to do the area justice. An entry fee of US$ 120 per person is levied “for administration”. For non-divers, jungle walks, river trips and bird watching expeditions are easily arranged.

3. Mandalay
Like Casablanca, the City of Gems is introduction to central Myanmar, but persevere because the country’s second city and cultural capital has plenty to keep visitors busy. A walk up Mandalay Hill will give you your bearings, plus fine views of the fort and palace below. Inevitably, there’s enough to keep temple aficionados busy for days. The venerated Maha Muni Pagoda, for example, is a favourite of Myanmar pilgrims. Street theatre combining drama and music is popular with locals and tourists. The performances are highly visual, offering a leisurely way to pick up a feeling for the country. The classic option is a two-day downstream journey between Mandalay and Bagan. The restored colonial river steamers of the Ayeyawady Flotilla Company are furnished with antiques and wicker armchairs, and the state rooms have brass fittings. The keen-eyed may catch a glimpse of dolphins from the teak observation decks. Don’t miss the riverside village stops, where you’ll be greeted with genuine smiles rather than outstretched palms.

4. Bagan
Bagan archaeo- logical zone (admission US$ 10) is the sole reason some people visit Myanmar. Rent a bicycle or even a horse and cart and spend at least a couple of days exploring. Climb to the uppermost terrace of Mingalazedi and the stupas seem to recede to infinity. The Greater Bagan region is so vast, it’s not unconceivable to have an entire temple complex to yourself. Despite earthquake damage in 1975, most of the temples (all about 800 years old) are still standing — the result of continuing restoration. At Bupaya, crowds gather every evening for the jaw-dropping spectacle of the sun setting over the Ayeyawady River. NyaungU is the best place to find a cheap guesthouse. In old Bagan, the Thande Hotel will suit those with deeper pockets.

5. Kalaw
This former colonial hill station is at the centre of a flourishing hiking industry. Situated on the rugged Shan Plateau, Kalaw is refreshing after the heat of the lowlands, and the scenery will inspire you to explore on foot. Choose a trekking service from the many along the main road. Expect to pay US$ 6 for a full-day’s hike. The people at the Winner Hotel are especially helpful. You’ll pass through village of chiropr-smoking Palaung and PaO trek to Inlay Lake, you’ll stop overnight at monasteries.

6. Inlay Lake
In the 19th century, Inlay Lake has long been Myanmar’s top chill-out spot. At an elevation of 900 metres the invigorating air encourages activity, and the options are endless. Besides hiking into the hills, an obvious draw are the boat trips to visit still villages and Intha fishermen busy with their cone-shaped bamboo nets. Floating market, temple and workshop circuit are tourists’ attractions in Myanmar. The Jumping Cat Monastery, which you should skip, is another. Instead, ask your boat pilot to head for the quieter, southern end of the lake. There’s plenty to see, minus the crowds. Aquaculture thrives there. A wide range of fruits and vegetables is grown in the marshes, and nearby lies an entire village devoted to pottery making. Accommodation encourages in the settlement of Nyaungshwe, while upmarket hotels skirt the lakeside.

7. Pyin Oo Lwin
A couple of hours from Mandalay by pick-up truck is the pretty former British hill station of PyinOoLwin. The obligatory colonial-era mansions, golf course, botanical gardens and church stand toe-to-toe with Myanmar temples and Chinese shrines. The market brims with the produce of a temperate climate and a large Indian presence means you can enjoy a curry, followed by a bowl of fresh strawberries. Caves, tribal villages and waterfalls are the principal excursion destinations. The Dattawgyi waterfalls at Anisakan cascade through five sections and make a pleasant spot for a picnic and a swim. There are hotels to fit all budgets.

8. Ngapali Beach
After the dust of the plains a beach may be just what you need and at Ngapali you’ll have most of the 3 km of sand to yourself. You won’t be pestered by hawkers, irritated by the drone of jetskies or driven insane by the thump of music from beachside bars. As you sit at a restaurant with your beer and grilled lobster dinner, watching fisherman hauling in their nets. Have a camera ready because the sunsets are sublime. There are plenty of new guesthouses, or you can treat yourself at the Thandwe Resort.

10. Across the Thai Border
It’s possible to dip your toes into Myanmar by crossing from Thailand in a day trip. Those wishing to visit Myanmar may apply visa in Tachilek crossing Myanmar-Thailand border from Mae Sai of Thailand. Thai bhat, US dollars and Myanmar kyats are all used interchangeably, and the ethnically minded traveller can feel confident that spending money here is likely to enrich locals rather than the govern-ment. Two-week visas enable the curious to bump overl and another 166 km to Kengtung. Travellers can enjoy multi-scenery around Kengtung by fitting manner of smooth transport.

Apart from shady streets of evergreen trees, Yangon is best known for its sparkling array of temples. The most magnificent is the 2,500-year-old Shwedagon Pagoda, which is usually visible as your plane makes its final descent.

1920s.

Beautiful scene of Inlay Lake.

2006.

The Scenic beauty of Mandalay Nanmyo and moat.

The drone of jetskies or driven insane by the thump of music from beachside bars. As you sit at a restaurant with your beer and grilled lobster dinner, watching fisherman hauling in their nets. Have a camera ready because the sunsets are sublime. There are plenty of new guesthouses, or you can treat yourself at the Thandwe Resort.

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YANGON, 2 Oct —Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Secure and Smooth Transport holds coord meeting yesterday.

Chairman of Yangon Division Supervisory Committee for Ensuring Secure and Smooth Transport Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command-Maj-Gen Myint Swe spoke on arrangements to be made for convenience of commuters, teachers and students of universities and colleges and road safety. Present were military region commanders, station commanders, Secretary of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Myint Kyi and members, members of the Supervisory Committee, Chairmen of District Peace and Development Councils, registrars of universities and colleges in Yangon, chairman of bus lines in Yangon Division and guests.

Members of the Supervisory Committee reported on work done in the respective sectors. The commander then fulfilled the requirements.—MNA

Myanmar delegation attends first ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Youth

YANGON, 2 Oct —The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa attended the first ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Youth held in Beijing, the People’s Republic of China from 28 to 30 September.

The annual meeting 2004 of Yangon South District USDA took place at its office in Thanlyin this morning.

Minister Col Tin Hlaing spoke on the occasion and presented gifts to USDA member for their brilliant performance in respective training courses, and cash assistance to USDA members first year student Ma Yee Yee Tin of Kayan Township and first year student Ma Thin Thazin of Twantay Township who are studying at Yangon Institute of Medicine-2.

Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, Director-General of Myanmar Police Force Brig-Gen Kyin Hl, local authorities, USDA members, officials of social organizations and guests.

Speaking on the occasion, CEC Member Col Tin Hlaing called on USDA members to actively participate by doing their bit in concert with the people in the tasks for restoration of peace and stability and national solidarity and accomplishment of the State’s seven-point future policy programme.

Wellwishers presented cash and publications to Yangon East District USDA through Minister Col Tin Hlaing, the Vice-Mayor and the MPF Director-General.

The chairman of the meeting delivered closing remarks. The annual meeting 2004 of Yangon South District USDA took place at its office in Thanlyin this morning.

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Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, Director-General of the Bureau of Special Investigation U Tun Hla Aung, Deputy Director U Khin Maung Aye and Commissioner U Hla Soe presented gifts to outstanding students.

Wellwishers presented cash donations to Yangon South District USDA through an official. District USDA Secretary U Lwin Oo presented the meeting. District USDA executives submitted sector-wise reports, followed by a general round of discussions.

The meeting passed resolutions.

Minister for SWR Maj-Gen Sein Htwa signing Beijing Declaration of ASEAN-China Cooperation on Youth.—MNA

YANGON, 2 Oct —The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa attended the first ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting on Youth held in Beijing, the People’s Republic of China from 28 to 30 September.

The minister and party met General Secretary of Myanmar Ambassador to China U Thein Lwin and party inspected Myoebye Dam and fulfilled the requirements.

Minister for SWD Maj-Gen Sein Htwa signing Beijing Declaration of ASEAN-China Cooperation on Youth.—MNA

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 3 October, 2004

Shan State needs to…

(from page 16)

They attended the broadcasting of fertilizers in the fields of Moeybe village, Phekon Township, Shan State. Officials reported on cultivation of monoison paddies in the township; Taunggyi District PDC Chairman Lt-Col Myint Tin and departmental personnel, on progress in implementing agricultural tasks; and Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint, on growing of the ten major crops in Shan State, measures for meeting the target of 600,000 acres of monsoon paddy, and assistance rendered for raising income of local farmers.

Lt-Gen Aung Htwe said that Shan State needs to strive for meeting the target of monsoon paddy in 2005-2006 fiscal year. Officials at all levels and local people are to make combined endeavours to accomplish the projects.

Lt-Gen Aung Htwe observed sample paddy strains and fertilizers and scattering of fertilizers in the paddy fields.

In the afternoon, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe and party inspected Myoebye Dam and fulfilled the requirements.

People’s Revolutionary Youth Union Mr Phong Sane Grouthian and exchanged views on youth affairs. The minister and party discussed matters relating to the meeting with Mr Zhou Qiang.

The minister and party, together with ASEAN Youth Ministers attended dinner to mark the National Day by Premier Wen Jiabao at the Great Hall of the People.

On 1 October, the minister met Mr Chey Chap of Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and exchanged views on youth affairs.

The minister and party arrived back here on 2 October.
INVITATION FOR QUOTATION

1. For and on behalf of the Ministry of Construction of the Government of the Union of Myanmar sealed Quotations with deferred payment for three years as well as L/C sight proposals are invited by the Project Management Unit, Public Works, Yangon, Myanmar for the detailed design (including the erection procedure), fabrication, supply of materials, erection equipment, and supervision of steel erection for NGALAIK CHAUNG Cable Stayed Bridge across NGALITE CHAUNG.

2. The particulars of NGALAIK CHAUNG Cable Stayed Bridge may be obtained for USD 4000 by request in writing or in person at the following address.

Project Management Unit
Public Works
No. 60, Shwedagon Pagoda Road.
11191 Yangon, Myanmar.

3. The Quotation should be submitted to the above address not later than 16.30 hours on 15th December, 2004.

4. When this Quotation is accepted, the Contract will be made in the name of Public Works, Yangon, Myanmar.

Managing Director
Public Works

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Vietnam’s vegetable, fruit exports up

HANOI, 1 Oct.—Vietnam shipped abroad 123 million US dollars’ worth of fruits and vegetables in the first nine months of this year, a year-on-year increase of 5.3 per cent.

Vietnamese fruits and vegetables were mainly exported to China, the United States and the European Union (EU), according to the General Statistics Office on Thursday.

To promote the exports, especially to China, the market of some 50 per cent of local product exports, Vietnam has established fruit and vegetable wholesale markets in bordering provinces, and upgraded freezing facilities to better preserve the farm produce. Besides, it is focusing on improving quality of its fruits and vegetables to meet stricter requirements on hygiene, preservation and styles.

Vietnam, which is expected to reap export turnovers of 140 million dollars this year, down 20 per cent against last year, targets vegetable and fruit export turnovers of 350 million dollars in 2005, and 1 billion dollars in 2010.—MNA/Xinhua

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Two people die of leptospirosis in Thailand

BANGKOK, 1 Oct.—Two people have died of leptospirosis in Thailand’s northeastern province of Kalasin, the official Thai News Agency reported Wednesday.

Over the past three months, more than 100 people in Kalasin have been hospitalized for suspected leptospirosis cases, said a hospital director Suphat Tharthip.

All the patients were farmers from districts of Kamalasai, Rong Khan, Yang Talad and Kunchamari of the province, Suphat said.

The disease, which literally means “mouse urine” in Thai, is usually carried by farm cattle, pigs, dogs as well as mice. Humans can contract the disease through open wounds, eye membranes, mouth and nostrils.

Suphat meanwhile urged farmers to wear protective boots or water-proof gloves while farming, and to avoid wading or exposing themselves to water for a long period.

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Budget carrier Jetstar Asia to take off by year end

SINGAPORE, 1 Oct.—Jetstar Asia, a Singapore-based low-cost carrier, is expected to take off by the end of this year, Australia’s Qantas Airways announced here on Wednesday.

Qantas owns 49.9 per cent of the joint venture while Singapore’s government investment company Temasek Holdings has 19.9 per cent.

The Australian airline said that the no-frills carrier is expected to get its Air Operator’s Certificate from the Singapore aviation authorities by mid-November.

MNA/Xinhua

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India fears climate change may intensify droughts, floods

NEW DELHI, 1 Oct.—India has conveyed to the United Nations its fears that climate change from greenhouse gases would intensify its droughts and floods and threaten coastal areas, the Indo-Asian News Service reported Thursday.

In a report to the UN’s Climate Change Secretariat in June, the Ministry of Environment and Forests said: “The initial analysis has revealed that climate change may have adverse effects in terms of seventy of droughts and intensity of floods in various parts of the country.”

“Forest biomass in India seems to be highly vulnerable to the projected changes in climate. Coastal areas are also vulnerable to climate variability in varying degrees.”

According to the ministry, the aggregate greenhouse gas emissions from human activities in India in 1994 amounted to 793 million tons of carbon dioxide, 18 million tons of methane and 178,000 tons of nitrous oxide.

India’s greenhouse gas emission constitutes 3 per cent of the global emissions as against 20 per cent contributed by the United States.—MNA/Xinhua

The report covers vulnerability assessment of key sectors such as agriculture, forestry, water-resources, health, infrastructure, industry, natural ecosystems, and further steps towards projected climate change.—MNA/Xinhua

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Passengers walking inside the Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Its operator, Malaysia Airports Holdings hopes to woo carriers from China and Middle East by waiving parking and landing charges in an effort to make it a regional hub.—INTERNET
British Govt to introduce control on smoking in public places

BRIGHTON (England), 1 Oct — British Health Secretary John Reid said on Thursday the government was poised to introduce controls on smoking in public places.

But he suggested Britain would adopt its own model rather than copying Ireland, where legislation has banned smoking outright in pubs.

"With New Labour it’s going to be a bit more difficult to do deals in smoke-filled rooms," Reid told the ruling Labour Party’s annual conference. He said he would make it easier for people to make healthier choices, including those "who want to give up the fags".

Government ministers are working on draft plans on smoking restrictions and Reid is expected to make an announcement to Parliament shortly.

The government is keen to strike a balance on smoking between being accused of engineering a "nanny state" and of failing to do enough to protect the public from passive smoking. Labour would adopt the "British way" in relation to policies on healthcare, Reid said — a "clear hint it would not adopt Ireland’s outright ban, according to aides."

The government is expected to seek a compromise solution, with different restrictions for different types of public places, from bars to pubs to restaurants. — MNA/Reuters

UNCTAD calls for debt write off of several African nations

New York, 1 Oct — A new United Nations reports has called for waiving the debt of several African nations struggling to service their financial obligations while trying to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Any lasting solution to debt overhang hinges as much on political will as on financial rectitude, the report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says.

According to UNCTAD, African received some $40 billion dollars in loans between 1970 and 2002. Despite paying back close to $50 billion US dollars in principal and interest, it still had a debt stock of $25 billion US dollars at the end of 2002. The report strongly argues for a total cancellation of Africa’s debt, saying that low levels of savings and investment — leading to high poverty and adverse social conditions — are among the biggest constraints on growth in low-income African countries.

Continued debt servicing by African nations would constitute a nominal reverse transfer of resources to creditors by a group of countries that by all indications could least afford this. — MNA/PTI

“Guiana 1838” grosses highest screen average of $70,540

HOUSTON, 1 Oct — “Guiana 1838”, a film based on the story of about one million Indians who were made to work on sugarcane plantations in British colonies in the 19th Century, has grossed well over 70,000 US dollars, the highest screen average in the entire North America, over the weekend.

The film, which opened in just one location in Queens, New York and sold a majority of seats in advance, has been made by first-timer Rohit Jagessar, a Guyanese American.

The historical docudrama tells the true story of the Indians who were shipped out of their country to work on sugarcane plantations in the British West Indies, Fiji, Mauritius and Australia among other British colonies following the abolition of African slavery in these nations. Director Rohit Jagessar’s self-distributed “Guiana 1838” invaded the list in the number one position with the highest per screen average recorded nearly a year-and-a-half ago, after opening in one Queens, NY cinema, a media report said here. — MNA/Reuters

Indonesia launches scientific rockets

JAKARTA, 1 Oct — Indonesia’s National Aeronautics and Space Agency (LAPAN) has successfully launched two scientific rockets from the Staspro launch pad at Cilacapun Village in West Java Province on Wednesday, an official said.

The rockets will help Indonesian scientists study rocket technology further and promote peaceful missions in the future, LAPAN spokesman Toto Marnanto, was quoted by the official Antara news agency as saying.

The launch of the two scientific rockets, the first of its kind in Indonesia, will allow experts to study the atmosphere and the climate in detail, Toto said.

The first rocket blasted off at 07:50 am and the second at 09:25 am, he said, adding that the launch was observed by Research and Technology Minister Hatta Rajasa as well as Indonesian Defence Force (TNI) officers.

He said LAPAN will launch two other rockets from the same place on Thursday at 5 am and 10 am. — MNA/Antara

China becomes important growing market for Singapore companies

SINGAPORE, 1 Oct — Singapore’s Minister of State for Trade and Industry Heng Chee How on Wednesday stressed the importance of the island state’s trade ties with China, saying that China is now an important growing market for Singapore companies.

China has become a big account for Singapore with non-oil exports growing by 40 per cent in 2002 and 34 per cent last year, Heng Chee How said while addressing a business conference here.

The minister said that China is also the most important recipient of Singapore’s foreign direct investment with cumulative contractual investments reaching 45 billion US dollars last year.

"We want to tell people that India is no more poor man’s country. It has a dual purpose—one to promote India as tourist destination and also create awareness about our country, which for long time has been treated as poor man’s land."

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The minister expressed the confidence that Singapore can cement its ties with China further by exploring new areas of bilateral cooperation. — MNA/PTI

"India Fests” eye Paris, Milan to promote tourism

NEW DELHI, 1 Oct — India’s Tourism Ministry is contemplating to hold “India Fests” in various parts of the world, including Paris and Milan, to promote tourism and create awareness about the country.

“We are interacting with big business groups and upmarket chains to explore possibilities of holding such events in cities including Milan and Paris,” Tourism Minister Renuka Chaudhary told PTI here Thursday.

Chaudhary, back from her week-long visit of these cities where she held road-shows to promote “Incredible India”, said “these events always have a dual purpose—one to promote India as tourist destination and also create awareness about our country, which for long time has been treated as poor man’s land.”

“We want to tell people that India is no more poor man’s country. It has a lot of talent and beauty,” the minister, who will be visiting London on a week-long tour from 2 October to hold more road-shows, said. — MNA/PTI

China makes an announcement to policies on debt write off of several African nations

New York, 1 Oct — A new United Nations reports has called for waiving the debt of several African nations struggling to service their financial obligations while trying to meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Any lasting solution to debt overhang hinges as much on political will as on financial rectitude, the report by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) says.

According to UNCTAD, Africa received some $40 billion dollars in loans between 1970 and 2002. Despite paying back close to $50 billion US dollars in principal and interest, it still had a debt stock of $25 billion US dollars at the end of 2002. The report strongly argues for a total cancellation of Africa’s debt, saying that low levels of savings and investment — leading to high poverty and adverse social conditions — are among the biggest constraints on growth in low-income African countries.

Continued debt servicing by African nations would constitute a nominal reverse transfer of resources to creditors by a group of countries that by all indications could least afford this. — MNA/PTI

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China becomes important growing market for Singapore companies

SINGAPORE, 1 Oct — Singapore’s Minister of State for Trade and Industry Heng Chee How on Wednesday stressed the importance of the island state’s trade ties with China, saying that China is now an important growing market for Singapore companies.

China has become a big account for Singapore with non-oil exports growing by 40 per cent in 2002 and 34 per cent last year, Heng Chee How said while addressing a business conference here.

The minister said that China is also the most important recipient of Singapore’s foreign direct investment with cumulative contractual investments reaching 45 billion US dollars last year.

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Valencia winger Vicente to miss World Cup qualifiers

MADRID, 1 Oct—Valencia winger Vicente will miss Spain's October World Cup qualifiers against Belgium and Lithuania with an ankle injury. Valencia chief of medical staff Jordi Canدل said Vicente, who sprained his ankle during Valencia's 2-1 defeat against Werder Bremen in the Champions League on Wednesday, would be on the sidelines for around two weeks.

Spain are at home to Belgium on October 9 and away to Lithuania on October 13 but Vicente should be available to play in Valencia's next Champions League match against Group G leaders Inter Milan on October 20. The in-form midfielder, who put Valencia ahead in the second minute of the game against German champions Werder, was almost certain to be in the starting line-up for the two qualifiers.

MNA/Reuters

Arsenal's 1-1 draw at Rosenborg painful reminder for Wenger

LONDON, 1 Oct—Arsenal's 1-1 Champions League draw at Rosenborg Trondheim was a painful reminder for manager Arsene Wenger that his Premier League masters are still only apprentices in Europe.

Wenger had hoped their opening 1-0 win over PSV Eindhoven a fortnight ago, however fraught, would have freed his players' minds from the demons of under-achievement.

Arsenal have never progressed beyond the quarterfinals of Europe's premier club competition and their traumatic start last season, with just one point from three games, was a factor in that laboured win over PSV.

Wednesday's draw, in which Arsenal enjoyed plenty of possession but failed to make it count, showed they have yet to learn the lessons of those past failures.

Rosenborg were never going to make things easy for Wenger's side. The Norwegians stuck at the task of closing down space in their final third, disrupting Arsenal's passing game and doing what they could to keep Thierry Henry at bay.

Yet Arsenal could still have found a way through, had they shown the killer instinct which has kept the English champions unbeaten in the Premier League since May, 2003.

Their failure to build on a sixth-minute lead from Fredrik Ljungberg was punished by Roar Strand's second-half equaliser and nearly 40 minutes of huffing and puffing around the Rosenborg penalty area failed to create a winner.

Wenger had no doubts about where the blame lay. "If you look at what our keeper had to do, it's a very frustrating result," the Frenchman.

"We (only) really came into the game when it was 1-1. Before that, we were a little bit too cautious and didn't do enough going forward. I feel we conceded the goal because of that.

"It's a game we should have won, but that's the Champions League. If you do not have the right concentration for 90 minutes you are punished...at this level, you have to take the points when you can." Though his side dropped two of them in Trondheim, Arsenal's campaign to reach the knockout phase is hardly going off the rails.

MNA/Reuters

Ferguson prefers to concentrate on team performance

LONDON, 1 Oct—While Wayne Rooney's debut hat-trick against Fenerbahce made all the headlines, it was not the manager Alex Ferguson to be cheerful.

The 18-year-old striker inspired a 6-2 Champions League rout of the Turkish side on Tuesday, lifting the gloom surrounding Old Trafford since United finished third in the Premier League last season behind Arsenal and Chelsea.

Keen to keep the pressure off Rooney, however, Ferguson preferred to concentrate on the performance of his team. "Our attacking play was excellent," he said. "It was a great start for Rooney but I'd rather talk about the game in general."

United made a stumbling start to the new campaign but victories over Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur lifted them to fifth in the Premier League table before the demolition of Fenerbahce.

Without first-choice midfielders Roy Keane, Paul Scholes and Cristian Ronaldo, Ferguson praised Brazilian Kleberson and Cameroon's Eric Djemba-Djemba in the centre, with young Frenchman David Bellion on the right.

Kleberson enjoyed his best performance in a United shirt, showing glimpses of the neat passing and creative skills that made him a key member of Brazil's 2002 World Cup-winning squad.

"He's got great talent and he showed that," Ferguson said. "He's a central midfield player and in fairness to him he has hardly played in that position since he joined us."

Ferguson also fielded his first-choice backline of Gary Neville, Gabriel Heinze, Rio Ferdinand and Mikael Silvestre for the first time, and although United conceded two goals from corners the manager refused to criticize his defence.

"Fenerbahce's set-piece play was very good," he said. "You have to credit the quality of the service."—MNA/Reuters

Newcastle United's Kluivert Patrick (3L) celebrates his goal with team mates against Hapool Bnei Sakhnin's during their UEFA Cup first round, second leg soccer match in Ramat Gan Stadium near Tel Aviv on 30 Sept. 2004. Newcastle United's won 3-1. —INTERNET

World number one seeded tennis player, Roger Federer of Switzerland returns a backhand to Ivo Heuberger of Switzerland during the second round of Tennis ATP Thailand Open in Bangkok.—INTERNET

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

7 Breathed despairingly 1 Flightless bird 6 Petulant 17 Perfume 14 Zodiac sign 15 Devotion 16 Guard 19 Shatter 20 Feather 21 Flower

8 Seat for a rider 2 Depraved 12 Gather 16 19 22 24 25

10 Domestic cock 3 Small-minded 5 Total (3,2) 9 Open-armed (anag.) 12 17 22 23 24

4 Herb 4 Total (3,2) 19 20 21

DOWN

1 Flightless bird 2 Depraved 5 Total (3,2) 9 Open-armed (anag.) 12 16 19 20 21

3 Small-minded 19 20 21

6 Petulant 5 Total (3,2) 4 12 13 15

17 Perfume 12 13 15 22

14 Zodiac sign 12 13 15 16

15 Devotion 12 13 15 16 23

16 Guard 12 13 15 16 23 24

19 Shatter 12 13 15 16 23 24 25

20 Feather 12 13 15 16 23 24 25

21 Flower 12 13 15 16 23 24 25

Romario bids farewell to international soccer

RIO DE JANEIRO, 1 Oct—Brazilian striker Romario, currently in Rio de Janeiro's Fluminense, bade his farewell on Thursday to international soccer matches with an exhibition game. The special match will feature his national teammates that won the 1994 World Cup in the United States.

"The match will serve as my farewell from international games, but also to remember the 10th anniversary of the winning of the fourth World Cup for Brazil and bring together a team that was very united," he said.

However, Romario explained that this was not a definitive farewell from soccer as he plans to continue playing in Brazil for a little longer. "How long, I don't know," he said.

The international career of the striker started in 1988, when he left Brazil to play for PSV Eindhoven, of the Netherlands. He then continued with his European career in Spain's Barcelona and Valencia.

Following his return to the Brazilian soccer, Romario competed in the league of Qatar in 2002, but played shortly and could not score a single goal.

For his farewell match on November 10 in Los Angeles, the United States (one of the venues for the 1994 World Cup), Romario has received the confirmation of his former teammates Taffarel, Jorginho, Ricardo Rocha, Marco Santos, Aldair, Branco, Dunga, Mauro Silva, Rai and Bebeto.

MNA/Reuters
Applications invited to MMU, MAEU

YANGON, 2 Oct — The Myanmar Maritime University of the Ministry of Transport will be opened on 1 December 2004 for 2004-2005 academic year. The courses namely BE (Nautical Architecture and Ocean Engineering), BE (Mechanical Engineering), BE (Port & Harbour Engineering), BE (River & Coastal Engineering), BE (Marine Electrical Systems & Electronics) and BSc (Hons) (Nautical Science) will be conducted at the university and the course duration will be five years each.

The Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University of the Ministry of Science and Technology will be opened on 1 December 2004-2005 academic year. BE (Aerospace-Propulsion & Flight Vehicles), BE (Aerospace Avionics), BE (Aerospace-Electrical Systems and Instrumentation) and BE (Aerospace-Fuel & Propellant Engineering) will be conducted. The course duration will be five years each.

At the Myanmar Aerospace Engineering University, three undergraduate diploma courses — Diploma in Engine & Airframe Technology, Diploma in Avionics Technology and Diploma in Electrical & Instrumentation Technology — will be opened on 1 December 2004 and course duration will be two years each.

All candidates for the following qualification may submit applications to these universities:

(a) The entrant must have obtained 400 marks in the 2004 matriculation examination and the entrant must have passed the exam with the following combinations of subjects:
   1. English, Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Economics
   2. English, Math, Physics, Chemistry, and History
   3. English, Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Biology
   4. English, Math, Physics, Chemistry, and Geography

(b) To attend undergraduate diploma courses at MAEU, priority will be given to those who passed the matriculation exam for 2004. But those who passed the same exams in previous years may submit applications and they can be chosen. However, those who were dismissed from any universities are not allowed. For the undergraduate diploma courses, the applicants must have above 336 marks in six subjects of the matriculation exam and those must have above 200 marks in the five subjects.

(c) The applicant must be a citizen.

(d) The applicant must have good medical check-up.

(e) They may sit personal test.

(f) Those wishing to attend the MMU should fill out the applications issued from the exam supervisor and send the application in the separate envelope to MMU, Thilawa, Thanlwin Township, Yangon Division. From 8 to 22 October, by postal service or in person.

(g) Those wishing to attend the MAEU must send the application in the separate envelope to the University Application Selection Committee of Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar) by postal service or in person. They must submit copy of marks list issued by Myanmar Board of Examinations. The original one must be brought when they enter the personal test. Those who passed the matriculation exam in 2004 can take the designated applications at the exam supervisors (Heads of BHES).

(h) Those who passed the matriculation exam before 2004 wishing to attend the diploma courses can take the designated applications at the exam supervisors (Heads of BHES). And then, the application is to be kept in the separate envelope and to be sent to University Application Selection Committee of Higher Education Department (Lower Myanmar) by postal service or in person. They must also submit copy of marks list. The original one must be brought when they sit the personal test.

(i) To avoid loss of opportunity to join the university, those who cannot enter the two universities should submit applications kept in the University Entrance Envelope to other universities in accord with the rules.

Those wishing to know further information may dial HED (Lower Myanmar) Thaikon Road, Kamaryut Township, Tel: 503147 and 525612; MMU, Thilawa, Thanlwin Township, Tel: 056-22180/22181/22182; 22183/22184; and MAEU, Mekitila, Tel: 064-22201, 064-22202. — MVA

WEATHER

Rainfall on 2-10-2004

— 0.19 inch at Yangon Airport,
— 0.08 inch at Kaba-Aye and
— 0.44 inch at central Yangon.
Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was
— 55.11 inches at Yangon Airport,
— 104.92 inches at Kaba-Aye and
— 107.64 inches at central Yangon.

Saturday, 2 October, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST:

During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kayin State, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Kachin, Chin and Shan States, Sagaing Division, scattered in Rakhine State and Mandalay Division and widespread in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amount of rainfall recorded were Dawei and Katha (2.28) inches each Pathein (1.85) inches and Thayaw (1.50) inches.

Maximum temperature on 1-10-2004 was 94°F. Minimum temperature on 2-10-2004 was 68°F. Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 2-10-2004 was 84%. Total sunshine hours on 1-10-2004 was (6.8) hours approx. Rainfall on 2-10-2004 was 0.19 inch at Yangon Airport, 0.08 inch at Kaba-Aye and 0.44 inch at central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 110.51 inches at Yangon Airport, 104.92 inches at Kaba-Aye and 107.64 inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 25 mph from East at (1830) hours MST on 1-10-2004.

Bay inference: According to the observations at (06:30) hrs MST today, yesterday’s low pressure area over South Bay still persist. It is likely to intensify further into a depression. Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal. Forecast valid until evening of 3-10-2004: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Kayah States, Sagaing Division, scattered in Mandalay and Magway Divisions and widespread in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Squalls with moderate to rough seas likely attimes off and along Myanmar Coasts Surface wind speed in squall may reach (35-40) mph. Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of increase of rain in Coastal areas. Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 3-10-2004; Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

Special weather report

YANGON, 2 Oct — According to the observation at 12.30hr MST today, the low pressure area over South Bay of Bengal has developed into a depression and centred at about 470 miles southeast of Chennai India. It is likely to intensify further and move some northerly direction.

The maximum wind speed is 40 mph near the centre. — MVA
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.