The New Light of Myanmar

Volume XII, Number 182

Established 1914

Friday, 15 October, 2004

YANGON, 14 Oct — The following is the full text of Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt in the opening ceremony of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions today:

May I present good wishes for the State level officials, departmental heads, diplomats, specially invited guests, judges and participants attending the opening ceremony of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.

May you be blessed with joy at heart and may you be the ones to safeguard the traditional cultural fine arts including singing, dancing, composing and playing of musical instruments are blessed with virtues of high standard, aesthetic values, and profoundness and extent, they are also endowed fully with national essence, while always contributing to the uplift of the dignity of the Myanmar race.

First, I would like to say that the holding of the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions every year on a grand scale as a means to help build the spirit of cherishing the performing arts among the people is to further strengthen the traditions of the Myanmar race, traditional culture, customs and national character.

All the national people will have to harmoniously advance through the different stages of the firm history of civilization in weal or woe, for their nation to stand tall among the global nations, and so also, it is natural for them to preserve and safeguard their own national characteristics and national culture throughout the history of nation building.

As Myanmar youths cherish and uphold their fine traditions and culture, they will surely become strongly imbued with nationalistic fervour to brave the penetration and influence of alien decadent customs.
PERSPECTIVES
Friday, 15 Oct, 2004

Peace and development for stronger national unity

The State Peace and Development Council has been striving for all round development of the Union of Myanmar by systematically implementing long-term plans in education, health, social and economic sectors.

Head of State Senior General Than Shwe has given guidance on the implementation of these development plans. He said that the 24-region development plans should be laid down so that each and every region becomes developed harmoniously. Therefore, the Government has been fulfilling all the requirements in each and every special development region by building universities and colleges, specialist hospitals, dams, roads and bridges.

As a result, there have been favourable conditions for national economic development and the people are now enjoying the fruits of development plans.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt met division-, district- and township-level departmental personnel, members of the social organizations and town elders and fulfilled the requirements for regional development. In his speech at the meeting, the Prime Minister said that nation-building tasks the Government had carried out during the past 16 years or so were enormous and that the national development during this period was very remarkable. It was because the Government is working day and night and no one can deny it, he added.

The Government has been building all the infrastructures for parallel development of all the regions in the Union. Therefore, there are now 156 universities and colleges and 776 hospitals all over the nation. When the Thanlwin river-crossing bridge (Mawlamyine) is completed, there will be over 160 major bridges and transport will become smoother and easier.

Moreover, development plans for border areas and national races were laid down and transport will become smoother and easier. Therefore, we would like to urge all those responsible and local people to work hard for more development of their township, district, state or division and the Union as a whole.

Industry-1

Minister U Aung Thaung receives Chinese delegation

YANGON, 14 Oct — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung received President Mr Wang King Wah from Wai Hung Machinery & Trading Ltd of the People’s Republic of China at the ministry this morning.

Present at the call were Deputy Ministers Brig-Gen Thein Tun and Brig-Gen Kyaw Win, directors-general and managing directors of departments and enterprises.

Cooperatives Minister receives Thai guests

YANGON, 14 Oct — Minister for Cooperatives Col Zaw Min received Chief Executive Officer Mr Ranjith Hettiarachchi of Thailand-based ACCU, and General Manager Mr Anan Chairuprachewin and Manager Ms Elevita of Thailand-based ACCU.

Information Minister receives German guests

YANGON, 14 Oct — Information Minister Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan received Mr Frank Buchs, Executive Producer of Polyphon Film Production of Germany and party at the Ministry of Information on Thanbyu Road, here, this evening.

Present on the occasion were Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Director-General U Khin Maung Htay of the Spring Board, Televison, Director-General U Chin Naing of the Information and Public Relations Department, Managing Director Col Soe Win of the News and Periodicals Enterprise, Managing Director U Bo Kyi of the Myanmar Mo-

World Sight Day observed in Yangon

YANGON, 14 Oct — A ceremony to mark World Sight Day co-organized by the Ministry of Health and World Health Organization was held at International Business Centre on Pyay Road this morning, attended by Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Do. First, the Deputy Minister and Dr Stephan Post of the Office of Resident Representative of WHO gave speeches.

After the ceremony, the Deputy Minister and guests viewed documentary photos, books and periodicals to mark the World Sight Day, eyecare, functions of the National Eye Bank, latest machine for operating eyes and the machine to test cornea quality. This year’s motto for the World Sight Day is “Vision 2020: the Right to Sight Elimination of Avoidable Blindness”.

People’s Desire

* Oppose those trying 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
1,081 US soldiers killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 13 Oct—As of Wednesday, 13 October 2004, 1,081 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to the Defence Department. Of those, 825 died as a result of hostile action and 256 died of non-hostile causes. The figures include three military civilians.

The British military has reported 67 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Bulgaria, six; Ukraine, eight; Slovakia, three; Thailand, two; the Netherlands, two; and Denmark, El Salvador. Estonia, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since 1 May 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 943 US military members have died — 716 as a result of hostile action and 227 of non-hostile causes, according to the military’s numbers as of Wednesday.

Since the start of US military operations in Iraq, 7,862 US service members have been wounded in hostile action, according to the Defence Department’s weekly tally.

The latest deaths reported by the military:
— Two soldiers were killed Wednesday in a car bomb attack in Mosul.
— One soldier was killed Wednesday when an explosive detonated in western Baghdad.
— Three soldiers were killed Tuesday when an explosive detonated near their convoy in eastern Baghdad.
— Two soldiers were killed Monday when rockets hit their camp in Baghdad; assigned to the Division Artillery, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.
— Army Sgt Pamela G Osbourne, 38, Hollywood, Fla.
— Army Pfc Anthony W Monroe, 20, Bismarck, ND.

Six US soldiers killed in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 13 Oct—Six US soldiers were reported Wednesday to have been killed in Iraq, while the country’s interim Prime Minister threatened a major offensive against the city of Fallujah unless its residents hand over Abu Musab Zarqawi, the Jordanian guerrilla leader thought to be hiding there.

Two of the US soldiers were killed Wednesday when a suicide bomber drove his car into a US convoy in the northern city of Mosul, a tactic that has grown more frequent among guerrillas in recent weeks. Another soldier died when a roadside bomb was detonated in west Baghdad, the military said.

The three other US deaths occurred Tuesday night when a roadside bomb exploded near a convoy in Sadr City.

The ambush that killed three American soldiers in Sadr City, the vast Shiite Muslim slum in eastern Baghdad, underscored the challenges facing what US officials describe as a peace initiative there rather than a formal cease-fire with an unevenly disciplined, homegrown force. —Internet

Iraqi shopkeepers remove debris outside damaged shops in the centre of the guerilla-held city of Fallujah recently. A Baghdad bombing killed three US soldiers in the latest wave of violence. —Internet

China committed to strengthening multilateral mechanism

BEIJING, 13 Oct—Chinese President Hu Jintao said here Tuesday that China will, as always, commit itself to strengthening international multilateralism with the United Nations at the core.

At a meeting with visiting United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Hu said China will support the reform of the United Nations and an important role played by the United Nations and its Secretary-General in international affairs.

Hu said the current international situation is undergoing profound changes with peace and development remaining the theme of the current times. However, unstable and uncertain factors have increased remarkably. How to address the threats and challenges, safeguard world peace and promote common development constitute major tasks facing the international community, noted Hu.

He said the United Nations, as the most authoritative inter-governmental organization with the widest representation, is an important stage for practising multilateralism and strengthening international cooperation.

Under the new circumstances, Hu said, the international community’s expectation for the United Nations is much higher rather than lower, and all countries need a strong United Nations in handling major issues concerning peace and development.

Noting that the UN Charter is the guide in international relations, Hu stressed that the purpose and tenet of the UN Charter should be safeguarded in practising multilateralism and strengthening international cooperation.

Agreeing with Hu, Annan said China, with increasing role in international affairs, is an important force for safeguarding world peace and development. The purpose of the UN reform is to facilitate the United Nations better respond to threats and challenges of all kinds, and it needs more support from member states including China, said Annan. —MNA/Xinhua

Germans stand by opposition to sending troops to Iraq

BERLIN, 13 Oct—German officials on Wednesday reaffirmed their policy of not contributing troops to the American-led force in Iraq and rejected speculation, prompted by a published interview with the country’s Defence Minister, that the policy might change.

“There will be no German soldiers in Iraq,” a government spokesman, Thomas Steig, said, answering reporters’ questions about the interview in The Financial Times in which Defence Minister Peter Struck seemed to hold the door open for a possible change in Germany’s policy.

“The position of the German government as far as Iraq is concerned is clear, it will not be changed,” The Associated Press reported that Mr Steig said. “It will remain in the future what it was in the past - there will be no German soldiers in Iraq.”

In the interview, published Wednesday, Mr Struck said, “At present I rule out the deployment of German troops in Iraq.”

But then, in the comments that provoked speculation about the possibility of a change, he said, “In general, however, there is no one who can predict developments in Iraq in such a way that he could make such a binding statement.”

Germany, which, with France, led European opposition to the invasion of Iraq, has embarked on a programme to train Iraqi police recruits outside Iraq, but it has declined to send any of its own troops. Given Germany’s size and importance, any change in that policy would have a powerful impact on the American-led force itself and on international attitudes toward the Iraq war.

German officials were emphatic in rejecting speculation that any active thought was being given to altering Germany’s refusal to participate directly in the war.

“No one in the Federal Government, including the Defence Minister, is thinking about a change of position on Iraq,” the German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder was quoted as telling cabinet members in a meeting on Wednesday. —Internet

Two Iraqi civilians walk near a burning US Humvee vehicle following a suicide attack in the northern city of Mosul, on 13 Oct, 2004. —Internet
Major car bombings in Iraq since 2003

MOSUL (Iraq), 14 Oct—Here’s a look at some of the major car bombings in Iraq since last year:

- Aug 19, 2003: Truck bomber strikes UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people, including top UN envoy to Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and wounding more than 100.
- Oct 3, 2003: A car bomb explodes outside a mosque in Najaf, killing at least 85 people, including Ayatollah Mohammed Baqir al-Hakim, one of the most respected Shiite Muslim clerics in Iraq, and wounding more than 400.

- Oct. 9, 2003: A suicide car bomber crashes a white Oldsmobile into a police station in Sadr City, the Baghdad slum that is Iraq’s largest Shiite enclave, killing himself, nine others and wounding as many as 45.
- Oct 27, 2003: Four suicide bombings target the Red Cross headquarters and four police stations in Baghdad, killing 40 people and wounding more than 200.
- Nov 12, 2003: Suicide truck bomber attacks headquarters of Italy’s paramilitary police in Nasiriya, killing more than 30 people.
- Dec. 14, 2003: A car bomb explodes at a police station in Khalidiyah, a town west of Baghdad, killing at least 17 people and wounding 33.
- Jan. 18, 2004: Suicide car bombing near main gate to the US-led coalition headquarters in Baghdad kills at least 31 people.
- Feb. 10, 2004: Suicide bomber triggers a truckload of explosives outside a police station in Iskandariyah, killing 53 people.
- Feb 11, 2004: A suicide attacker blows up an explosives-laden van in a crowd of Iraqis waiting outside an army recruiting centre in Baghdad, killing 47.
- April 21, 2004: Near-simultaneous explosions caused by car bombs near police stations and police academy in southern city of Basra kill at least 68 people and wound 200.
- June 17, 2004: A sport utility vehicle packed with artillery shells slams into a crowd waiting to volunteer for the Iraqi military, killing 35 people and wounding 138.
- July 19, 2004: A fuel tanker rigged as a massive bomb hurries toward a Baghdad police station and explodes, killing nine people, wounding 60, and levelling a huge section of an industrial neighbourhood.
- July 28, 2004: A car bomb explodes outside a police station used as a recruiting centre in Baqouba, killing at least 68 people and wounding more than 50.
- Sept. 4, 2004: A suicide bomber detonates a car bomb outside an Iraqi police academy in Kirkuk as trainees and civilians leave for the day, killing 20 people and wounding 36.
- Sept. 14, 2004: A car bomb explodes near a Baghdad police headquarters where Iraqis wait to apply for jobs, and gunmen open fire on a van carrying police in Baqouba, killing at least 59 people and wounding at least 114.

A hedged apology from Blair on Iraq

LONDON, 13 Oct—Prime Minister Tony Blair gave his most explicit apology on Wednesday for the flawed intelligence assessments upon which he took Britain to war in Iraq, but he rejected opposition demands that he says he was sorry for “misrepresenting” intelligence.

“I take full responsibility and apologize for any information given in good faith that has subsequently turned out to be wrong,” he told the House of Commons in a spirited exchange with opposition members.

“Whatever I do in any way accept is that there was a deception of anyone. I will not apologize for removing Saddam Hussein. I will not apologize for the conflict. I believe it was right then, is right now, and essential for the wider security of that region and the world.”

His apology reflected his careful management of the issue in Parliament, where a large fraction of his Labour Party is in rebellion over Iraq policy. They and the opposition members have been demanding an apology for mistakes in judgment about the existence of weapons stockpiles and for inadequate planning for stabilizing and rebuilding Iraq.

MI6, Britain’s intelligence service, has been forced to retract assertions that Mr Hussein had chemical and biological weapons that could be deployed on 45 minutes’ notice, a claim that helped to galvanize British public opinion in favour of war.

A US vehicle drives near a burning Humvee vehicle following a car bomb attack in the Iraqi northern city of Mosul, on 13 Oct, 2004. —INTERNET

A US helicopter flies over a burning Humvee vehicle

African ministers review women’s lives

ADDIS ABABA, 13 Oct—More than 40 African ministers in charge of gender affairs gathered in Ethiopia’s Addis Ababa Tuesday afternoon, discussing gender inequity and the family.

The organizer of the event said the 43 ministers participating in the Seventh African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+10) will focus on highlighting achievements, constraints and challenges, joined by a cross-section of other key stakeholders including parliamentarians, entrepreneurs, and representatives of international organizations.

Gender inequity has been one of the constraints on Africa’s recovery singled out by the United Nations, costing the continent almost one percent age point of growth each year.

Participants of the conference will thus review blueprints of African development, such as the New Partnership for Africa Development, the Millennium Declaration and the International Conference on Population and Development, from a gender perspective.

The conference is scheduled to run from Tuesday to Thursday, and will identify a series of actions and measures to be implemented over a five-year period, in order to promote gender equality and equity in Africa.

Ahead of the ministerial conference, experts participating in the Beijing+10 meetings began their assessment of African women’s lives last week.

The experts focused on trafficking of women and children, and the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and the family. MNA/Xinhua

Britain warns travellers of kidnap threat in Iraq

LONDON, 14 Oct—Britain’s Foreign Office updated its travel advice for Iraq, warning its nationals that they could be targeted by kidnappers in the north of the war-torn country.

The Foreign Office amended its advice for Iraq and Egypt “to reflect the most up to date information on the continued threat from terrorism”, a spokesman said.

Its current information about Iraq advised “against all but essential travel” to the country, and that the “security situation is dangerous”.

The new guidance states: “There is a direct threat of kidnap to foreign nationals in northern Iraq and we believe that British nationals may be targeted. “There continues to be widespread outbreaks of violence and threats to kidnap British and other foreign nationals.”

“It is likely that there will be an increase in the number of attacks during (the Muslim holy month of) Ramadan from October 15 to November 14.”

The advice comes a week after Ken Bigley, a 62-year-old British engineer, was beheaded by captors who had held him since September 16, demanding the release of Iraqi female prisoners from British and US custody.