Secretary-1 attends opening of multi-media classrooms of
No 5 BEHS in Mingaladon Township

YANGON, 18 Oct — Myanmar Education Committee Vice-Chairman State Peace and Development Council Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Soe Win attended the opening of multi-media class-rooms of No 5 Basic Education High School in Mingaladon Township this morning.

Also present at the opening ceremony were Yangon Division PDC Chairman Yangon Command Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Minister for Communications, Posts and Telegraphs and for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Thein Zaw, Yangon City Development Committee Chairman Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Deputy Minister for Education U Myo Nyunt, senior military officers, officials of the SPDC Office, heads of department, division, district and township level departmental officials, the headmaster, teachers and students, members of the Parent Teacher Association and school board of trustees and donors.

First, students welcomed Lt-Gen Soe Win and party, singing the song of Myanmar Kyaung to the accompa-niment of the band troupe. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Deputy Minister U Myo Nyunt and SBT Chairman U Soe Myint formally opened the ceremony and the Secretary-1 unveiled the sign-board of the multi-media classrooms.

The Secretary-1 viewed electronic media (video) room, the computer aided instruction room where students were learning how to use computer under the supervision of the teachers, language lab room, computer application room, study room, electronic media (audio) room and art room.

Next, he accepted his portrait drawn by a student as a gift and inspected the domestic science room.

Headmaster U Nay Tun reported to the Secretary-1 on the brief history of the school and efforts of the teachers who train the students to become outstanding ones. Chairman of the school board of trustees U Soe Myint reported on tasks.

MNA

Final match of U-21
Tatmadaw soccer on 20 Oct

YANGON, 18 Oct — Third place match of the 20th Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy U-21 Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) Football Tournament 2004 was held in Youth Training Centre (Thuwunna) at 3 pm today.

In the match, the Yangon Command team beat No. 11 LID 3-2 and secured the third place.

On 20 October afternoon, the South-West Command will play against the Camp Comman-dant’s Office team in the final match at Youth Training Centre (Thuwunna).

MNA
**PERSPECTIVES**

**Tuesday, 19 October, 2004**

**Strive for self-sufficiency in rice**

Myanmar being an agro-based country with vast area of arable land and favourable weather conditions, its economy mainly depends on agriculture. Therefore, we shall have to double our efforts to increase the productivity of the agriculture sector.

For the development of the agriculture sector, the Government is implementing the plans for self-sufficiency in rice and edible oil and for exporting beans and pulses and industrial crops. With this end in view, dams, embankments, river-water pumping stations and underground water supply projects are being built wherever possible all over the nation.

Out of the 42 million acres of arable land in the nation, the total sown acreage is only 25 million. Therefore, measures will have to be taken to extend the cultivation. Secretary-2 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, during his trip to Shan State (North), attended the coordination meeting on the development of the agriculture sector there. In his speech on the occasion, the Secretary-2 urged the responsible personnel of division-level departments, Myanma Agriculture Service and chairmen of district peace and development councils to try their best to successfully implement the economic plans for the development of Shan State (North), to make sure that there is self-sufficiency in rice and to meet the targets for ten major crops.

In Shan State (North), rice was 96 per cent sufficient for local consumption in the year 2003-2004, and efforts are being made to put more than 100,000 acres under Sinshweli paddy and more than 8,000 acres under special high-yield Sayadana paddy in the year 2004-2005. A study of land application in Shan State (North) shows that the sown acreage for various crops stands at 1.1 million and there is still room for extending it.

Myanma Agriculture Service is required to render necessary assistance by providing cultivation technology, by opening stations that produce hybrid paddy strains and by reclaiming new plots of land. And we would like to call on regional authorities, staff of Myanma Agriculture Service and farmers to work in concert to extend the cultivation of special high-yield paddy to be able to fully meet the local consumption.

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**Poem**

Preamble to 12th Competitions

* Myanmar traditional
  In keeping with tradition and culture
  The finest of fine arts
Traditional festival
  Great occasion observed annually
  Variety of victories
  We’ve come to the 12th
  And making of music history.
  * From the fourteen States and Divisions
    Brilliance of twinkling young stars
    Sparkling with pride, must show their ability
    New strength has come to the fore.
  * As the cold season is ushered in
    “Sing” till the lilting sound’s aloft
    “Dance” with features of the ancient
    “Compose” with new tunes aloft
    “Play” till the music goes skyhigh
    Like the wondrous claps of thunder.

Maung Shwe Nwe (Inlay)
Poor supply situation threatening US Army’s ability

WASHINGTON, 18 Oct — The former top US commander in Iraq complained last winter to the Pentagon that a poor supply situation was threatening the Army’s ability to fight, The Washington Post reported on its web site on Sunday.

Army Lieutenant-General Ricardo Sanchez wrote in a letter to top Army officials that the lack of key spare parts for tanks, helicopters and other systems was such a severe problem that “I cannot continue to support sustained combat operations with rates this low,” the newspaper reported.

Senior Army officials told the newspaper that most of Sanchez’ concerns had been addressed but that they continue to closely monitor the problems he identified.

Chinese official urges food safety measures

BEIJING, 17 Oct — The Chinese Government will enhance management of the circulation of agricultural products to ensure food safety, said a commerce official here Saturday. Huang Hui, assistant to the Minister of Commerce told an international seminar on agricultural products safety that China has taken measures and witnessed certain achievements in this area, but still not enough. The problems lie in package stock and wholesale market management, which will be the main targets of the government’s next step of actions, he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Bomb blast shatters Baghdad cafe

BAGHDAD, 17 Oct — An explosion reportedly caused by a car bomb has killed six and wounded at least 20 at a cafe in a diplomatic quarter of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

The explosion hit a cafe popular with Iraqi police personnel near the Australian Embassy, a US military spokesman told Reuters news agency.

Emergency vehicles were seen rushing to the area on Sunday evening.

Iraq’s fledgling police force is a frequent target for guerrillas opposed to the country’s US-backed government. Policemen at the cafe are said to have been eating a meal to mark the end of the holy month of Ramadan, according to Reuters.

The explosion scattered shards of metal, glass and body parts over a large area, witnesses say.

Several foreign embassies and offices are located in the area where the explosion occurred, the Jadriyah district on a peninsula in the Tigris River.

Russian President winds up China visit

XI’AN, 17 Oct — Russian President Vladimir Putin left here by special plane Saturday noon, concluding his three-day China visit.

Chinese Vice-Premier Wu Yi saw him off at the airport.

In Xi’an, capital of northwest China’s Shaanxi Province, Putin met with leaders of five provinces and autonomous regions of northwest China and visited the Museum of Terracotta Warriors. Putin arrived in Beijing Thursday morning at the invitation of Chinese President Hu Jintao.

During his stay in Beijing, Putin met with President Hu Jintao, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress Wu Bangguo, and Premier Wen Jiabao.

The two heads of state signed a Sino-Russian Joint Statement and sanctioned an implementation programme for the Sino-Russian Good-Neighbourly Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation. This is Putin’s third visit to China and the first one in his second term of presidency. — MNA/Xinhua

Thousands of Britons protest war in Iraq

LONDON, 17 Oct — Thousands of anti-war and anti-globalization activists marched through central London and filled Trafalgar Square on Sunday to protest the US-led coalition’s presence in Iraq.

The march marked the culmination of the third European Social Forum — three days of speeches, workshops and debates largely dominated by Iraq and the US presidential elections.

Marchers carried signs reading “World’s No 1 Terrorist” over a picture of President Bush. British Prime Minister Tony Blair was also a target, with placards reading “Out with Blair.”

Several activists blew loud whistles or joined in political chants as they trudged through the capital on a cold, rainy day. Police estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 people set off from Russell Square around 1 pm, but organizers announced that 75,000 had reached Trafalgar Square by 3.30 pm.

While the forum discussed a range of issues concerning privatization and globalization, the march was almost overwhelmingly devoted to opposition to the war in Iraq and the Bush administration.

“I’ve been coming to every demonstration against Bush I can,” said Liz Mawl, a resident of London carrying an “Out with Bush” sign.

His foreign policy is very destabilizing for the entire international community, and I’m not sure Americans realize that’s bad for them as well,” she said. Many of the marchers said they hoped to send a message to American voters ahead of the Nov 2 US elections through the demonstration.

“I think our message to Americans is simple: Don’t vote for Bush,” said Emma Jane Berridge, a London resident.

China’s forestry coverage rate up to 16.55%

SHANGHAI, 17 Oct — China is now covered in 16.55 per cent forest, said sources with the State Administration of Forestry (SAF) in Shanghai Municipality on Friday.

The country’s forested area exceeded seven million hectares for two years in a row, as the artificial forestry area of China has reached 47 million hectares, the top in the world, said Cao Qingyao, director of the news office of the SAF.

“Such achievements in afforestation should be attributed to six major forestry projects of China, which cover more than 97 per cent of China’s administrative counties,” said Cao. — MNA/Xinhua
Australia turns down plea for more troops to protect UN staff in Iraq

SYDNEY, 17 Oct— Australia has turned down a diplomatic plea for a contribution to a military force to protect United Nations (UN) personnel in Iraq.

The government was approached through its diplomatic missions in the United States to help with security for the UN assistance mission in Iraq as UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan struggles to win international support for a security force to protect the body’s staff.

A lack of security for its officials has been a key concern of the UN since a suicide bomber killed 22 people, including the special UN representative to Iraq, Sergio de Mello, in a truck bomb blast at UN headquarters in Baghdad 14 months ago.

A shortage of adequately trained security forces has hampered the UN in its aim to assume a widened role in Iraq and assist the Iraqi administration with planning for the national elections in January next year.

So far, the UN has obtained commitments only from a number of small countries, including Fiji, in response to its call for help, and has had to fall back on the support of hard-pressed US military for protection.

But a spokesman for Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said Monday the Australian Government has already made a substantial commitment to Iraq and it will not be sending more troops.

British bankers face US extradition over Enron

LONDON, 17 Oct— A British judge ruled Friday that three former British bankers can be extradited to the United States to face fraud charges involving Enron executives.

Judge Nicholas Evans told a hearing at Bow Street Magistrates Court in London there is a good basis for prosecuting them in the United States that it does not represent a breach of their human rights.

The three, Gary Mulgrew, Giles Darby and David Berningham, who formerly worked for NatWest Bank, were involved in a complicated deal with the failed American energy company Enron, over the sale of a stake in an Enron entity in 2000.

US prosecutors have accused them of seven counts of “wire fraud” through the US banking system and are seeking to extradite them for trial in Houston, Texas.

They have been fighting the extradition, insisting that they did nothing illegal and that if they’re to be tried, the case should be heard in Britain rather than the US.

Their defence counsel Alun Jones QC said the men had contacted British authorities including the Financial Services Authority Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Secretary about the case, but none decided to start an investigation in Britain.

If extradited, they would have to pay their own legal costs, estimated at one million to two million US dollars, and would likely not be granted bail.

Spanish Defence Minister meets US Ambassador

MADRID, 17 Oct— Spanish Defence Minister Jose Bono and the US Ambassador to Spain, George Argyros, held a meeting on Friday to advance the bilateral relations.

A spokesman for the US Embassy said it was “a very productive meeting, in an environment of friends, of individuals sharing fundamental goals and interests”.

It is very important to put an “end to the rhetoric excess that has not contributed to creating an environment in which it is possible to work”, when both countries have “many fundamental interests in common”, added the spokesman.

Recently, Jose Bono made several remarks on the US-Spanish relations, as a consequence of not inviting US military representatives to participate in the National Day parade.

Poland is squeezed by cost of Iraq role

WARSAW, 18 Oct— Poland’s support of the US-led coalition forces in Iraq is hindering the modernization of its armed forces as costs continue to increase for its 2,500 troops and their equipment in Iraq, according to senior defence officials.

Janusz Zemke, Poland’s Deputy Defence Minister and state secretary for defence, said in an interview that Poland had sent some of its best soldiers and equipment to Iraq since taking over the command of a multinational force in the central zone in September 2003. All the troops deployed are professionals, he said.

“We simply will not be able to squeeze more of our own budget for military procurement,” Zemke said.

“At the same time, these huge outlays for Iraq are delaying the final transformation of our armed forces. It is a fundamental problem.”

His remarks coincide with growing calls by opposition parties to bring home the troops as soon as possible. Prime Minister Marek Belka told Parliament last Friday that Poland might be able to start withdrawing troops early next year.—INTERNET

Italian Renaissance painting recovered in Bulgaria

SOFIA, 17 Oct— An Italian Renaissance painting stolen a year ago in Cyprus, possibly a Titian, has been recovered in Bulgaria in a police raid, media reported on Friday.

“Abraham’s Sacrifice of Isaac”, thought to be by the Renaissance master or his Venetian school, was taken from a Cypriot art collector’s home in Nicosia in May 2003, the national daily Tved said.

It is badly damaged mainly due to poor preservation and being kept folded and being had been torn.

The international police force Interpol had launched a global search for the 16th Century oil painting, which could be worth up to four million euros if experts prove it is a Titian original, it said.

Bulgarian police arrested a 24-year-old man in the southeastern town of Stara Zagora after finding the canvas, some two metres high and 1.5 metres wide, in his house.

“The painting was smuggled through several borders,” the local police chief Toncho Mihailov told the paper.

Police will now order an expert to determine the origin of the painting.


Annan says Iraq war has not made world safer

LONDON, 17 Oct— The US-led war in Iraq has not made the world any safer, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said in an interview broadcast on British television.

“I cannot say the world is safer when you consider the violence around us when you look around you and see the terrorist attacks around the world and you see what is going on in Iraq.” Annan told the ITV network.

“I cannot say the world is safer. We have a lot of work to do as an international community to try and make the world safer.” Annan has previously described the US-led war that toppled Saddam Hussein as “illegal” because Washington and its coalition partners never got UN Security Council backing for the invasion. —MNA/AP

Iraqi police secure the area after a civilian convoy was hit by a roadside bomb in Basra, southern Iraq on 17 Oct, 2004. The bomb hit a convoy of four cars, seriously injuring one person according to Basra police. — INTERNET