May I wish all the State level officials, departmental heads, diplomats, specially invited guests, judges and contestants attending the closing ceremony of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions “Mingalaba” (auspiciousness) in the best Myanmar tradition.

The Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions have been held annually with the lofty aim of further raising the fine traditions and culture and customs, national pride and nationalist fervour of the Myanmar people through promotion and conservation of Myanmar cultural and fine arts heritage. Now, the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions have been completed successfully.

National pride is the honour of our country and people, and preservation of fine traditions is an auspicious act leading to further glorifying national pride. As glorification of national pride in turn further vitalizes nationalist fervour, it is strength reinforcing the national might that is always ready to safeguard the interest of our nation and people at any time.

In this regard, as further glorification of national pride of the Myanmar people and further consolidation of national strength is being materialized by the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions we have been participating and holding with all-out efforts have contributed much to the implementation of the national task of preserving, safeguarding and promoting national identity and traditions and culture and customs, a responsibility we are shouldering at present.

The current penetration of alien culture is not just a normal engagement and integration. Behind cultural penetration is a well-schemed intention of diminishing and weakening our traditions and culture, social values, morals, ethics and national norms through gradual domination of alien customs, thoughts, styles and social values. With national outlook, we must always beware of such cultural penetration.

Alien cultures, customs and life styles are coming into the nation through the cultural and economic doors, using advanced IT and media as a vehicle to carry them. We can ward them off and safeguard ourselves from their domination only with the national strength of vitalizing national spirit and preserving and promoting national culture.

I would like to say that the significant power of Myanmar culture and fine arts is that they have never been tainted with any foreign culture, whenever they come into contact with it and that Myanmar character and styles, qualifications, power and national might, have been preserved and safeguarded for centuries, are being restored and promoted by the Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions at present.

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

Thursday, 4 November, 2004

Produce more and more well-qualified citizens

The State Peace and Development Council has been putting into motion the Border Areas and National Races Development Project, the 24 Special Regions Development Project and the Rural Development Project in harmony with the aim of transforming the nation into a modern developed one. The basic education sector plays a major role in promoting the education standard of the nation especially border and rural areas. That was the reason why Head of State Senior General Than Shwe gave guidance to pay serious attention to building the basic education sector firmly and to make trips down to the villages to make its foundation stronger.

The Government places emphasis on the education field in a bid to accomplish these three projects as the development of human resources in the education sphere is the main factor for greater progress of the nation.

Addressing the Meeting No 4/2004 of the Myanmar Education Committee, Chairman of the MEC Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein stressed the need for the majority of the national people to possess knowledge to be able to distinguish what is right or wrong and good or bad, and said it plays a central role in building a discipline-flourishing democratic nation. There are over 60,000 villages and 40,000 basic education schools altogether in Myanmar and so it is apparent that the Government has identified opportunities for rural people to pursue education.

Since the basic education serves as the foundation in the drive for the nation to become a developed one, measures are to be taken systematically to raise the standard of the schools. Only when the basic education schools are capable of producing qualified persons, will there be highly-skilled human resources in the nation. Now, the nation has been facilitated with river-crossing bridges, dams and reservoirs, modern airports and hydropower plants with the might of national intellectuals and intelligentsia. Indeed, it is the fruitful result of promotion of the education sector.

Besides, priority should be given to enhancement of the condition of the basic education schools as it will help raise the moral conduct of students.

All those responsible are therefore urged to develop the basic education sector to produce more and more well-qualified citizens capable of contributing towards building of a discipline-flourishing democratic nation.

**Communal Kathina of Ponnayung Township USDA held**

**YANGON, 3 Nov—** Communal Kathina of Ponnayung Township Union Solidarity and Development Association was held in the precincts of Uyiitaw Pagoda in the township on 1 November. Present were CEC member of USDA Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Brig-Gen Khun Maung, departmental officials, secretaries of Rakhine State and Township USDA and members. Kathina robes and offerings were presented to members of the Sangha of monasteries in the township.

**Antiques of Pyu era unearthed in Pyinmana**

**YANGON, 3 Nov —** The villagers of Kyaung Village in Pyinmana Township, Mandalay Division, on 2 November presented antiques of Pyu era to the Archaeological Department. The antiques including 13 silver coins, a metal bangle, a ring, a broken silver earring were found near a stream at the East of the village.

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**Soe Kyaw Naing wins Monywa Open**

**YANGON, 3 Nov —** Soe Kyaw Naing (Srixon) won the first prize worth K 800,000 and a flight ticket for Yangon-Mandalay-Yangon in the professional golfers event of the Monywa Open Golf today with 288 strokes at a golf course in Monywa yesterday evening.

The second prize of K 400,000 went to Aung Win (Srixon) who scored 291, while joint thirds Zaw Zaw Latt and Min Naing got K 250,000 each.

In the amateur level, Aung Win won the championship prize with 298 strokes and took away the award worth K 250,000, a gift of Tiger Beer and a Yangon-Mandalay-Yangon flight ticket of Air Mandalay.

Naing Lin won the second prize valued at K 200,000 with 299 strokes; and Then Zaw Myint, the third prize worth K 175,000.

Special prizes were awarded by Myanmar PGA, Myanmar Golf Federation, Han Management Event and other companies.

**Myanmar mountaineers to climb MaDwe Mountain**

**YANGON, 3 Nov —** Myanmar mountaineers will climb MaDwe Mountain in Patao District in Kachin State from 8 November to 1 December. The snow-capped MaDwe is 15,158 feet high.

A leader of the mountaineering team accepted the uniforms and cash assistance at National Sports Stadium-1 here yesterday presented by Myanmar Olympic Committee Chairman Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint.

Chairman of Myanmar Trekking and Mountaineering Federation Dr Paing Soe briefed the minister about arrangements for climbing the mountain.

**Controller of Military Account to close on Dipavali Day**

**YANGON, 3 Nov —** Dipavali Day, which falls on 12th November (Friday), is a public holiday. Pensions will not be disbursed by the Controller of Military Account of the Ministry of Defence on that day.—MNA
Pipeline, oil well in northern Iraq attacked, halting exports from north

KIRKUK, 2 Nov—Saboteurs blew up an oil pipeline and an oil well in northern Iraq in two attacks Tuesday that shut down oil exports from the north, probably for the next 10 days, Iraqi oil officials said.

Late Tuesday night, a huge explosion rocked the compound of Ghabaza oil field, 22 miles southwest of Kirkuk, said an official with the state-run Northern Oil Co. The oil valves were blown up and huge fire engulfed the area, the source added.

The attack on the Ghabaza well will likely cut into the country’s oil production, an engineer with the state-owned North Oil Co told Dow Jones. “This evening, an act of sabotage took place against one of our key oil wells, and that will reduce our crude oil production from the north,” the engineer said, without saying how much output would be hurt.

Earlier in the day, saboteurs blew up an oil pipeline in northern Iraq that is used for export purposes, oil officials said. The officials said the stoppage could last for as long as 10 days.

The pipeline, which connects the oil fields in Kirkuk with the Beiji refinery, was attacked at 10 am, said Col. Mohammed Ahmed of the Northern Oil protection services. Firefighters battled to put out the fire some 44 miles southwest of Kirkuk. Oil is being diverted to domestic refineries while repairs are carried out on the pipeline.

“There’s only 3.5 million barrels in storage now,” said a Ceyhan port agent. “The pumping was stopped this morning because of the explosion,” he said. Without a reopening of the pipeline, scheduled loadings of sour Kirkuk crude will diminish these stores further, the agent said.

On Thursday, Repsol is due to lift 1 million barrels and ExxonMobil Corp is scheduled to load another 600,000 barrels.

US soldier captured as two car bombs explode in Mosul

BAGHDAD, 2 Nov—Iraqis have captured an American soldier in the city of Samarra, north of Baghdad, an Iraqi police spokesman told Reuters on Tuesday.

Lt. Col. Mohammed Ahmed of Samarra police said the soldier had been seized Monday night by gunmen. According to him, American soldiers were out in force in the streets of the city Tuesday.

Elsewhere, at least two members of Iraq’s security forces were killed and 11 others injured in double car bombing attacks in the northern city of Mosul. One car went off in the path of a national guard patrol in a southern district of the city, killing two members of the Iraqi national guard and injuring four others, an Iraqi police officer told AFP.

A second car bomb detonated a few hours later in the path of a convoy of General Rashid Falih, a national guard commander, injuring seven of his companions. Four of the injured were in critical condition.

Six Iraqi soldiers killed in Iraq blast

BAGHDAD, 2 Nov—A suspected IED (Improvised Explosive Device) ripped through an Iraqi National Guard truck in Baghdad on Tuesday afternoon, killing six Iraqi soldiers and wounding four others, according to an eyewitness.

Shortly after the attack, the site was secured by US soldiers and the vehicle was removed, along with the Iraqi soldiers who were riding in it.  

Meanwhile, Iraqi forces were searching for militants in a raid in the central Iraqi city of Baqouba.

They were acting on a tip-off from local residents, but the group of armed men managed to escape.

Aguil Hamad al-Adili, the Deputy Governor of Diyala province, was killed in Baqouba on Friday. The Assistant Governor for Projects Affairs was killed by unidentified gunmen as he was sitting in a friend’s office.

A known militant group, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army, is believed to be behind the assassination.

WHO warning backs duck farming ban in Thailand

BANGKOK, 2 Nov —The World Health Organization (WHO’s) warning that bird flu might be transmitted from ducks to humans supports Thai Government’s decision to ban open-field duck farming, a senior health official has said.

Charal Trinivuthipong, director of the Bird Flu Operation Centre, said WHO’s statement supports the policy of bringing all ducks to closed systems and the spread of the virus.

“If flocks of ducks roam freely in fields, control of the bird flu virus is unlikely to be effective,” Charal was quoted by the Bangkok Post newspaper as saying on Monday.

WHO warned on Friday that domestic ducks, including healthy birds, could transmit the H5N1 strain of virus to other poultry and even humans. They pose a particular threat as H5N1 carries because they stay healthy longer, making it difficult to detect the virus.

The government has prohibited any new open-field duck farming in the country and farmers raising ducks in the field must switch to a closed system. Statistics from the control centre showed that from October 1 to October 30, a total of 397,751 fowls, including ducks, were culled to contain the spread of the disease.

Meanwhile, the government plans to control bird flu in winter season as the cold temperature can prolong the survival of the virus.

China should boost development of three major city clusters

GUANGZHOU, 3 Nov—China should boost the development of three city clusters respectively on the Yangtze River delta, Pearl River delta and the area along the Bohai Bay rim, said Niu Wenyuan, an urbanization specialist, at a mayors’ forum here on Monday.

A city cluster is a high-standard mode for urbanization which features resource sharing among bigger and smaller cities, according to Niu. Niu said the three city clusters in eastern, southern and northern parts of China should play a role in the nation’s urbanization and serve as major engines for the national economy.

The two-day mayors’ forum, which opened Monday, was sponsored by the China Association of Mayors, China Research Institute of Urban Science and the Municipal Government of Guangzhou, capital of south China’s Guangdong Province.

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French FM hits back at jab by Iraq’s Allawi

BRUSSELS, 2 Nov—French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier hit back Tuesday at criticism by Iraq’s interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi that France is “bogged down in the past” over its policy towards his war-scarred country.

“What I think frankly ... is that in a difficult and very serious situation like that in Iraq, I think that everyone, starting with the Prime Minister, has better things to do than get involved in polemics like that,” Barnier said.

Allawi warned France on Sunday against appeasing guerillas in order to secure the release of two of its nationals held hostage in the country, as he prepared to travel to Brussels for an EU summit later this week.

“France must revise its policies towards Iraq because its actions and stances are driven by the fact two Frenchmen are held hostage in Iraq.”

Barnier said that he did not know what Allawi meant by the term “bogged down.” “I don’t see at all what ... he is talking about,” the French Minister said, speaking at a meeting with his EU counterparts in Brussels.

Filipino accountant confirmed kidnapped in Iraq

MANILA, 2 Nov—Labour Secretary Patricia Santos Tomas confirmed Tuesday evening that a 29-year old Filipino accountant from Davao City has been abducted in Baghdad, Iraq, late Monday.

Santos Tomas identified the victim as Roberto Tarongoy, a certified public accountant who has been working with the Saudi Arabian Trading and Contracting Co (SATCo), a company that caters food to American troops.

Also reported kidnapped with Tarongoy were an American, a Nepalese and an Iraqi. Masked gunmen reported storming the SATCo offices in Mansour, Baghdad, late Monday.

US govt record borrowing in 1st quarter of 2005

WASHINGTON, 2 Nov — The US federal government will have to borrow a record 147 billion US dollars in the first quarter of 2005, the Treasury Department announced Monday.

The department also projected net borrowing needs of 100 billion dollars for the final quarter of this year, less than the 122 billion dollars it had earlier estimated. The projected net borrowing of 147 billion dollars in the first quarter of next year would surpass the previous record borrowing amount for a single quarter of 146 billion dollars set in the first quarter of this year.

In the third quarter of this year, the government borrowed a net 89 billion dollars. The government, running record budget deficits over the past two years, is now only 25 million dollars below the national debt ceiling of 7.384 trillion dollars. In an attempt to avoid hitting the national debt limit, the government began on 14 October halting new investments in a retirement fund for federal workers.

The budget deficit for the fiscal year ended on 30 September hit a record 413 billion dollars, up from the previous record of 377 billion dollars set in 2003.

Chinese antiques stolen from British Museum

LONDON, 2 Nov—Fifteen Chinese antique items were stolen from the British Museum in London last week, a spokeswoman for the museum said Monday.

The stolen items, most of them jewellery including hairpins, earrings and fingernail guards dating back from the 700th to 1400 AD, were possibly stolen during Friday evening, the spokeswoman told Xinhua in a telephone interview.

She added that the museum noticed the items were missing Saturday. Police suspect the robbery is linked to the theft of nine Chinese art objects worth about 60,000 pounds (about 108,000 US dollars) from the Victoria and Albert museum in London last month.

The spokeswoman gave no estimate of how much the stolen treasure are worth.

“We don’t put financial values on our pieces, but these are obviously historically important items,” she said. — Xinhua

Cambodian PM leaves for trade fair in China

PHNOM PENH, 2 Nov—Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen left Cambo- dia Tuesday for a four-day trip to China to attend the China-ASEAN Expo. Heading a 20-member delegation, Hun Sen said before boarding the plane that the “Expo is impor-tant as that will push bet- ter relations between ASEAN and China.”

The presence of Cam-bodia, Laos, and Myanmar at the forum will reflect the full integration into the region, he said.

According to the sched- ule, the China-ASEAN Expo will be held in south China’s Nanning City from Wednesday to Saturday.

While staying in China, Hun Sen will attend a number of meetings with delegations from other nine member states of Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China to discuss trade is- sues, according to his Cabi-net staff. — Xinhua