YANGON, 4 Nov — National Health Committee Chairman and State Peace and Development Council Secretary-1 Lt-Gen Thein Sein addressed the 42nd NHC Meeting at the meeting hall of Zeyathiyi Beikman on Konmyinttha here this afternoon.

The meeting was attended by NHC member ministers, the Yangon mayor, the deputy minister for Health, the director of Medical Services of the Ministry of Defence, responsible personnel of the State Peace and Development Council Office, departmental heads of the Ministry of Health, and officials.

In his speech, Secretary-1 Li-Gen Thein Sein said the government is making all-out efforts to turn the country into a peaceful, modern and developed nation. At the same time, systematic measures are also being taken for the emergence of a discipline-flourishing democratic state.

In this process, the government is now successfully holding the National Convention, which is the most vital step of the seven-point Road Map.

Fitness and higher education of the people are essential for the improvement of all sectors in the country in line with the national outlooks. Therefore, the government formed the National Health Committee and the Myanmar Education Committee to effectively carry out the tasks in respective sectors.

The NHC is responsible to evaluate health issues and give counsel to the government; to lay down national health policies; to take the lead in drawing health policies and implement them; and to give counsel to the government as to cooperation with the WHO, the UNICEF and other health-related international organizations and promulgation of health-related laws.

The NHC has been implementing its national health plans laid down in accord with the national health policies. For the time being, the NHC is implementing its 12-point National Health Plan 2001-2006.

Keeping in mind the future state which is being built in accord with national objectives, the NHC is also implementing the 30-year long-term national health plan.

In implementing the different stages of the national health plan, the Ministry of Health receives assistance from related ministries and governmental organizations. Moreover, the Union Solidarity and Development Association, the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, the Myanmar Red Cross Society, and other volunteer social organizations render cooperation to the ministry.

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Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Mayor inspects projects of YCDC

YANGON, 4 Nov—Chairman of the Yangon City Development Committee, Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, accompanied by officials, inspected the projects being undertaken by the YCDC this morning. On arrival at the Central Forest Zone, the Mayor and party heard reports presented by officials concerned on progress of construction of a replica of Mt. Popa and future plans. The Mayor instructed the officials to upgrade roads, construct a car park, complete the tasks timely and ensure worksite safety, and inspected the project site. The Mayor also inspected progress in constructing the wooden bridge linking Bagan Lone island and Khayamardipa island, buildings, and the bridge linking Pale island and TimCurGon island, and gave instructions on completion of the projects as soon as possible and minimizing loss and wastage. Next, the YCDC Chairman inspected land preparations for building a gold resort and left instructions on ensuring a standard training course.—MNA

Mayanmar delegation returns home from ACMECS

YANGON, 4 Nov—Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu arrived back here by air this morning after attending the Ayeyawady-Chao Phra-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) Ministerial Retreat held in Krabi, Thailand from 1st to 3rd November 2004. At the Retreat, projects that are implemented under the five areas of cooperation during the past year, especially short-term projects to be implemented from 2003 to 2005 were assessed and solutions to effectively overcome the obstacles in implementing them were sought.

It was also agreed at the Retreat, to set up Sectoral Working Groups for each area of cooperation to assess and expedite the process of implementing the ACMECS Plan of Action. In this regard, Myanmar will serve as Coordinating Country for the Agricultural and Industrial Cooperation Sector. After the Retreat, Myanmar delegation leader U Kyaw Thu attended the Signing Ceremony and signed the Protocol to the Bagan Declaration on the Admission of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to ACMECS.

During the ACMECS Ministerial Retreat, ACMECS member countries met in an open session with Development Partners (Australia, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and Asian Development Bank-ADB). ACMECS member countries tabled 26 projects under ACMECS Plan of Action for consideration by the Development Partners. The Development Partners expressed their support and interest to collaborate with ACMECS members in implementing the projects.

The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu received Mr Keishiro Fukushima, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan and discussed matters relating to bilateral relations.

Also present at the meet were U Nyan Lynn, Director-General of Consular and Legal Affairs Department and U Soe Lynn Han, Counsellor of Myanmar Embassy in Bankok. The Myanmar delegation was welcomed back at the Yangon International Airport by directors-general and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Acting Representative Charge d’Affaires Mr Opas Chantarasup of the Royal Thai Embassy. — MNA

Chinese wushu coach arrives

YANGON, 4 Nov—Mrs Liang Xia Kul, a daoshu coach from the People’s Republic of China arrived here by air from PRC yesterday to train the Myanmar team that will take part in the sixth Asian Wushu Championships to be hosted by Myanmar from 20 to 28 November.

Mrs Liang will coach Khaing Khaing Maw, Kaythi Maw and Myo Min Soe, daoshu athletes of the Myanmar team to the championships.

She won gold medal in All China Wushu Championships in 2003, and was included in the Chinese team that staged wushu demonstrations in Myanmar in 1999.

NLM

Date refixed for CLMTV-ECS Trade Fair

YANGON, 4 Nov — The first CLMTV-ECS Trade Fair 2004 to be held on 1st to 5th December is rescheduled to 3rd to 7th December. MNA

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now.

Chinese coach Mrs Liang Xia Kul seen together with selected Myanmar Wushu athletes. —NLM

Prevent penetration of alien culture

Now, the Union of Myanmar is moving on the path where there prevails justice and unity suitable for the country’s traditions, culture, national character and norms. And the Government has been implementing the State’s Seven-point Road Map step by step, which can guarantee the nation to continue to march along the national path firmly.

In this regard, efforts are to be exorted with heart and soul through the might of national cultural performing arts to shape the better future of the nation in conformity with national character, value, norms and standards.

Member of the Panel of Patrons for Organizing the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions, also Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein, delivered an address at the prize presentation ceremony for the Competitions the other day.

The Secretary-1 in his address said “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”.

Now is the time when the Government is constantly reinforcing our traditions, culture and national sentiment, which have been preserved for centuries, by organizing Myanmar traditional cultural performing arts competitions. It is also exposing grandness of Myanmar’s traditions and cultural standard and uplifting the dignity of Myanmar society, while safeguarding cultural heritages including Myanmar traditional cultural performing arts competitions. Only then, will nationalistic spirit, which has been conceived through preservation of national heritages, and national strength, which serves the dignity of Myanmar society, while safeguarding national norms through gradual domination of alien customs, thoughts, styles and social values, With national outlook, we must always beware of such cultural penetration.”

Therefore, the entire people are urged to constantly preserve and uplift the nation’s noble traditions, fine customs and grand culture so as to be fully equipped with national fervour in order to prevent the penetration of alien culture.
Netherlands and Hungary to quit Iraq coalition

LONDON, 3 NOV—The Netherlands and Hungary announced plans to pull their troops out of Iraq next March, moves that could undermine Washington’s efforts to secure greater international support for its mission.

The decisions came as other coalition states, often facing public criticism over the deployment of troops in Iraq, have indicated they will review their plans after the elections due to be held in Iraq in mid-January.

The Dutch Defence Ministry said 1,350 soldiers going to Iraq on Thursday would leave in March and would be the country’s last military contribution to the stabilization effort. Fercenc Gyurcsany, the Hungarian Prime Minister, announced plans to withdraw 300 troops in March.

“To stay there until elections is an obligation, to stay there for much longer is an impossibility,” said Mr Gyurcsany, according to MTI, the state news agency.

The troop deployment has been a political millstone for the ruling Socialist party, which in the summer forced former Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy out of office and replaced him with Mr Gyurcsany.

About ten states have already either pulled out or announced plans to do so, including Spain, which had 1,400 in Iraq until this year’s general election when the centre-right Socialist party, which in the summer forced former Prime Minister José Maria Aznar was replaced by the Socialist administration of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero.

Bulgaria said it would cut its military presence by 10 per cent next month.

Roadside bomb kills US soldier in Iraq

BAGHDAD, 3 NOV—A roadside bomb killed a US soldier in Iraq on Wednesday, the US military said.

The bomb exploded as the soldier’s patrol passed the device in Salman Pak, just south of the Iraqi capital. Another soldier was wounded, the military said.

A soldier from the Queen’s Dragoon Guards warns an Iraqi driver during a lightning storm to keep his headlights off to avoid being hit by enemy fire as a British army convoy travels overnight from Basra to join the Black Watch Battle group at Camp Dogwood, 20 miles south west of Baghdad.

Russian nuclear submarine fires ballistic missile

MOSCOW, 3 NOV—A nuclear submarine of the Russian Pacific Fleet successfully fired a ballistic missile from the Sea of Okhotsk at 12.25 Moscow Time (0725 GMT) on Tuesday, ITAR-TASS news agency said.

The warhead of this intercontinental ballistic missile developed at the Moscow institute of thermal engineering is unique in its capability to change course and altitude in order to effectively overcome successive anti-missile defence lines.

The Balava is expected to arm promising new-generation submarines as well as the Typhoon-type submarines (project 941). The intercontinental ballistic missile launched on Tuesday has hit the training target on the Chizh testing ground on Cape Kanin Nos, aide to the commander-in-chief of the Russian Navy Igor Dygalo was cited by ITAR-TASS as saying.

He said the successful firing of the missile “confirms the readiness of the combat management systems of the sea-based strategic nuclear forces for the accomplishment of this kind of assignments.”

Bush wins re-election, Kerry concedes defeat

WASHINGTON, 4 NOV—US President George W Bush has won re-election as his opponent Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry called him and conceded defeat Wednesday.

From his hometown of Boston, Massachusetts, US senator Kerry expressed his congratulations to Bush, telling the Republican President the country now was too divided.

“Congratulations, Mr President... We really have to do something about it,” Kerry said in the telephone call described by sources as lasting less than five minutes, media reported. Bush agreed, calling Kerry a worthy, tough and honourable opponent, according to the report.

Kerry’s call came after his campaign learned that Bush was assured of victory in key battleground state of Ohio, giving the president an unquestioned majority in the electoral votes.

Both Bush and Kerry will make a statement later in the day about the election, according to US TV networks. Earlier in the day, White House Chief of Staff Andrew Card said Bush will hold a formal victory declaration to give Kerry the “time to reflect” on the results.

Meanwhile, the Kerry camp made an announcement, refusing to concede defeat before every vote in the controversial state of Ohio had been counted. “We will fight for every vote,” Senator John Edwards, Kerry’s running mate told supporters in Boston.

Bush has got more than 270 electoral college votes needed to win the presidency after his victory in Ohio.

1,123 US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 3 NOV—As of Wednesday, 3 November, 2004, at least 1,123 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 860 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defence Department as of Wednesday. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is four higher than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated Wednesday at 10 am EST.

The British military has reported 70 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 985 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 751 deaths resulting from hostile action.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

A soldier was killed Wednesday in a roadside bombing 12 miles south of Baghdad.

Internet
British troops in central Iraq suffer new attacks

One mortar exploded at the Camp Dogwood complex, about 25 km southwest of Baghdad, on Tuesday evening, the report said. Five other “impacts” which failed to explode were also reported.

However, the British Defence Ministry said no one was injured and there was no damage to the base. The attack was the fourth at Camp Dogwood since the 850-strong battle group, led by three companies of armored infantry from the 1st Battalion the Black Watch, arrived last Friday. The Black Watch is expected to begin active patrolling this week, blocking off exit routes from Fallujah and releasing US forces for an anticipated all-out assault on the stronghold, the BBC said.

British Defence Secretary Geoff Hoon said on Tuesday he was confident that the Black Watch would be back in their base in the southern part of the country within 30 days. The British government agreed on 2 Oct to send hundreds of troops north to central Iraq to cover for US troops planning a new assault in Iraq.

Concern has been expressed in Britain that the redeployed troops would be in greater danger in a region that has seen far more violence than their base in Basra.

Asian, African countries pledge to promote trade

TOKYO, 3 Nov — Asian and African countries concluded a two-day meeting on Tuesday, agreeing to intensify Africa-led economic cooperation to help the poverty-stricken continent.

Participants affirmed in a joint policy framework that the ultimate goal of promoting trade and investment is essentially to attain poverty reduction through economic growth.

They said that “African ownership and leadership are essential for promoting trade and investment that will lead to self-reliant and sustainable development and equitable growth as well as support and cooperation of the Asian countries.”

The importance of private sector was highlighted. Both sides appealed to all participating countries and organizations to ensure political, economic and social stability, good governance and transparency over a substantial period of time in a bid to gain the confidence of private enterprises.

In April, the conference, known as the TICAD Asia-Africa Trade and Investment Conference, is part of follow-up actions of the Third Tokyo International Conference on Development (TICAD III) held last year. Representatives of governments, multinational organizations and private companies from about 60 countries and economies in the two regions attended the meeting, according to the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

HK people gaze at Latin “Under the Same Sun” exhibition

HONG KONG, 3 Nov — Two exhibitions, “Under the Same Sun” arts and crafts from Latin America and “Latin Gaze” photography of the “Latin America in Hong Kong” Festival were held at Hong Kong Cultural Centre on Tuesday.

— MNA/Xinhua

Four Jordanian truck drivers kidnapped in Iraq

AMMAN, 3 Nov — Militants seized four Jordanian drivers along a highway in Iraq close to its western border with the kingdom, a Foreign Ministry official said on Wednesday.

The official said the Jordansians were intercepted on Tuesday on the main highway to Baghdad in a desolate location near the town of Rutba, close to the Jordanian-Iraqi border.

The highway is a key trade route.

Relatives said they had been driving four trucks loaded with plastic goods for US army camps. No further details were available.

Several Jordansians have been kidnapped in Iraq since a wave of abductions of foreigners began in April.

— Internet

Bulgaria to reduce troops in Iraq

SOFIA, 3 Nov — Bulgaria will cut its troops in Iraq from 480 to 430 beginning from December, the Defence Ministry said Wednesday.

“US and Polish military experts in Iraq have said 430 troops will be enough to carry out the military tasks in the new spot,” said spokesman Vladislav Prelevov.

Bulgaria sent 500 troops to Iraq in May 2003. The troops operated under a Polish-led multinational division to maintain social order and protect projects in postwar rebuilding.

More than 70 percent of 8 million people disapproved of the US-led war, in which Bulgaria has lost seven of its soldiers. The leftist opposition has called on the government to withdraw its troops after the January general elections in Iraq.

— Internet

IAF chopper makes world’s highest landing in Ladakh

NEW DELHI, 3 Nov — An Indian Air Force Cheetal helicopter on Tuesday made the world’s highest landing at a density altitude of 7621 metres on Sasser Kangri massif in Eastern Ladakh setting a new world record.

The Cheetal, sporting a Cheetah airframe with a more powerful tms-333-2b2 aero engine, thus bettered the record held by the US Bell helicopter of landing at an altitude of 7655 metres achieved on July 28, 2004, according to IAF spokesperson Squadron Leader Mahesh Upasani.

Flown by Group Captain A S Butola and Squadron Leader S Sharma the chopper landed at the Sasser Kangri depression between main and south peak at an altitude of 7070, pressure altitude of 7670 metres and density altitude of 7870 metres.

The feat was witnessed and validated by Wing Commander Upadhayay, Chief of Command Uni Pillay flying India’s indigenous light helicopter Dhruv.

IAF sources said the motivation behind the world record breaking bid was that a Cheetah helicopter of the IAF had landed at a record density altitude of more than 7,500 metres just a few months back — not in the quest of a record, but to rescue casualties from a mountaineering expedition in extremely challenging conditions. “This feat made the IAF to launch a bid to break the world highest landing record”, the spokesperson said. — MNA/PTI

A fire burns from a car bomb attack near an office of the Iraqi Ministry of Education in Baghdad, on 2 Nov, 2004. — Internet

Iraqi school children cry near the site of a car bomb attack near an office of the Iraqi Ministry of Education in Baghdad, on 2 Nov, 2004. — Internet