Performing Arts Competitions continue for third day on grand scale

YANGON, 15 Oct — The 13th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions continued at the designated places, here, the third day today.

Present on the occasions were members of the panel of patrons of Organizing Committee for the Performing Arts Competitions, Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the Competitions Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Member of the Panel of Patrons Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Soe Win Maung, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Wai Lwin, Chairman of the Work Committee No 3 Military Region Commander Col Tint Hsan and members, officials of sub-committees, maestros and enthusiasts.

At 9 am, Chairperson of the Panel of Judges Assistant Director (Music) Daw Tin Tin Mya, Assistant Engineer Daw May Pyone Khaing and members supervised the singing contest at the National Theatre.

Seven contestants from States and Divisions took part in the professional level men’s classical/modern song contest will be held at the same venue. At the National Theatre, 13 competitors took part in the amateur level men’s dancing contest, and 16 students in the basic education level (aged 10-15) girls’ dancing contest.

Maung Soe Thein and troupe representing Rakhine State taking part in higher education level men’s orchestra team contest. — MNA

Ma Aye Mya Thida of Mon State takes part in basic education level (aged 15-20) girls’ classical song contest. — MNA
People's Desire

* Oppose those relying 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

Cultivation methods demonstrated in Hlegu Township

YANGON, 15 Oct — The demonstration of cultivation methods was held in the field of special zone (500 acres) near Malit Village in Hlegu Township this morning, attended by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

The commander inspected paddy fields which can yield 130 baskets per acre.

He was conducted round by Managing Director of Myanmar Agriculture Service U Ohn Than and Division Manager U Aung Hsan and officials.

The commander greeted officials and farmers, and told them to study agricultural methods and cultivate high quality paddy strain to exceed the target.

The commander also inspected paving of 12 roads linking Nos 1, 2 and 3 Highways. Division Superintendent Engineer U Soe Tint and officials reported on progress of work.

He called on officials concerned to finish the work as soon as possible.

MNA

Archers under training to take part in SEA Games

YANGON, 15 Oct — Selected sports athletes are undergoing intensive training in order that they can win gold medals in the XXIII SEA Games to be held in the Philippines from 27 November to 5 December 2005.

Myanmar archery team will participate in the archery contest of the SEA Games in which 'compound' and ' recurve' men's and women's events.

Officials of the Sports and Physical Education Department and President Dr Khin Shwe, vice-presidents and the secretary of Myanmar Archery Federation are giving necessary assistance to the archers.

Myanmar archery team comprises leader U Tint Hsan, Vice-President of MAF, manager U Kyaw Oo, Assistant Director of SPED and Secretary of MAF, assistant managers U Than Kyawng and Daw Thida Win technical expert Mr An Seung Bum, coaches U Aung Thura, Daw Than Than Yu, Daw Myat Thuzar Myint and Daw Thi Thi Win and archers Nyi Nyi Tun, Tin Lin Aung, Zaw Win Htai and Zaw Min Tun, Nam Mo Hwan, San Yu Hwe, Aung Ngein, Nan Htay Htai, Paw Oo, Myo Aung Hsan, Lin Nai, Ye Min Swe, Yu Nandar Htai, Kathy, Mary San and Tin Zin Ei.

NLM

Myanmar entrepreneurs group leaves for Guangzhou

YANGON, 15 Oct — At the invitation of Guangzhou Trade Fair Organizing Committee, a Myanmar entrepreneurs group led by Mandalay Division Merchants and Industrialists Association Joint-Secretary U Ba Kyi Sein and Executive U Kyaw Min (Sein & Mya Mattress) left for Guangzhou, the People’s Republic of China, by air this morning to attend the 98th Guangzhou Trade Fair to be held from 15 to 20 October. They will make excursion tour to Hong Kong and Bangkok.— MNA

Lucky Bird organizes computer technological demonstration

YANGON, 15 Oct — Lucky Bird Computer Sales & Service Centre gives a technological demonstration at the sales centre, No 355, Thibintyu Street, Mingala Taungnyunt Township in Yangon and the sales centre of Room No-38, third floor, Yadanaung Market in Mandalay, from 12 to 31 October as a special programme of the Thadingyut Festival.

Those interested may visit the sale centres, and during the period of technological demonstrations, computers and accessories can be available 5% to 50% off. — H

*perspectives*

Sunday, 16 October, 2005

Collectively participate in prevention of blindness

The ceremony to observe the 2005 World Sight Day, jointly organized by the Health Department and World Health Organization, was held at International Business Centre on Pyay Road in Yangon on 13 October 2005, attended by departmental officials of the Ministry of Health, the WHO Resident Representative, representatives of UN agencies, officials of social organizations and health staff.

At present, there are estimated 45 million blind people globally. The aim of the ceremony was to eliminate avoidable blindness and to promote blindness prevention activities.

As Myanmar is a WHO member country, it is actively participating in the health programmes laid down by WHO.

Myanmar has been launching World Sight Day since year 2000. Since then, four new secondary centres for prevention of blindness were established at Kyaukpaduang, Gangaw, Myaing and Taungdwingyi during the period of five years. New district level eye treatment centres were established at Bhamo, Toungoo, Maubin, Loilem, Pyinmana and Hinthada. Those facilities were equipped with microsurgical instruments.

In Myanmar, trachoma was the primary cause of blindness in the central part of Myanmar in the past. Trachoma control project was launched in 1964, and after 30 years of activities active trachoma rate was brought down from 43 per cent in 1960 to 1 per cent at present.

The Ministry of Health has been taking systematic measures to prevent the recurrence of trachoma and is giving priority to treatment of cataract and glaucoma, which is the main cause of blindness.

The number of ophthalmologists increased from 130 in the past to 200 to date. Moreover, ophthalmic nurses and opticians were trained, and basic health staff and voluntary health workers are being trained to fully engage in eye health care services.

Centres for prevention of blindness, state and division eye centres, basic health care centres and social organizations are to make integrated and well-coordinated efforts for the success of blindness prevention.

At a time when the Ministry of Health is taking systematic steps for prevention of blindness, which is a noble task, it is incumbent upon national people including local authorities, health staff and social organizations to lend themselves to the drive.
CIA says US ignored forecasts of Iraqi ethnic turmoiL

WASHINGTON, 14 Oct — The Bush Administration paid scant attention to prewar US intelligence on Iraq predicting the ethnic and tribal turmoil that now threatens the future of the country, a newly released 2004 CIA report said.

The report said US policymakers instead concentrated more on the agency’s assessments of Iraq’s weapons programme, which helped them make the case for the March 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq but which turned out to be flawed and misleading.

“Intelligence assessments on post-Saddam issues were particularly in-sightful,” said the report. But it added: “In an ironic twist, the policy community was receptive to technical intelligence (the weapons programme) where the analysis was wrong, but apparently paid little attention to intellelignce on cultural and political issues (post-Saddam Iraq), where the analysis was right.”

Administration officials justified the 2003 invasion in part on assertions that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and was a threat to the region and the United States. No such weapons have been found and investigations have blamed the CIA for huge lapses in its prewar intel-ligence.

The report, published in the current issue of the quarterly CIA magazine, ‘Studies in Intelligence’, was commissioned by former CIA director George Tenet. He resigned last year after fierce criti-sim over the faulty Iraqi weapons assessments.

The report said the agency was largely cor-rect in its estimate of cul-tral and political postwar issues and “accurately forecast the reactions of the ethnic and tribal fac-tions in Iraq”.

The Bush Administration suggested in early in the Iraq war that American forces would be greeted as liberators by a grateful Iraqi people. President George W. Bush initially took a cavalier approach to the insurgency, suggest-ing it would be no threat to US forces there and de-claring: “Bring ‘em on!”

But more than two years later the country is gripped by a deadly Sunni Arab insurgency against the Shiite and Kurdish-led government and US troops and nearly 2,000 US troops have been killed.

Presented in July 2004, the report said prewar Iraq intelligence also con-cuded accurately that Saddam had no opera-tional or collaborative ties with al-Qaeda and cal-cu-lated the war’s impact on oil markets.

The CIA report, produced by a team led by former CIA deputy direc-tor Richard Kerr, was is-sued as the last in a series of three reports on Iraq intelligence. It is unclas-sified but has not been re leased publicly until now.

The two earlier reports re-main classified.

US involvement in Iraq also came under fire on Wednesday from former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter, who said the CIA’s faulty WMD intel-ligence only provided the pretext for a long-stand-ing US policy of regime change.

US troops starving Iraqis, says UN

GENEVA, 14 Oct.—A United Nations human rights investigator has accused the US and British forces in Iraq of breaching international law by depriving civilians of food and water in besieged cities.

But the US military denied the charge and said that while supplies were sometimes disrupted by combat, food was never deliberately withheld.

Jean Ziegler, a former Swiss sociology professor who is UN special rapporteur on the right to food, said on Friday that the Geneva Conventions banned military forces from using “starvation of civilians as a method of warfare”. But he said that in Falluja, Tal Afar and Samarra, Iraqi and US-led forces had cut off or restricted food and water to encourage residents to flee before assaults on entrenched Sunni fighters over the past year. “A drama is taking place in total silence in Iraq, where the coalition’s occupying forces are using hunger and deprivation of water as a weapon of war against the civilian population,” Ziegler told a news briefing in Geneva. Geneva Conventions Two 1977 protocols to the 1949 Geneva Conven-tions, which lay down rules of conduct in armed con-flicts, ban using deprivation of food or water as a weapon of war. They also prohibit destruction of food stores or interruption of food supply lines.

Ziegler said he understood the military rationale of the US-led forces that were “facing such a horrible enemy—these insurgents who do not respect any law of war and who use the civilian population of cities like Falluja or Tal Afar as human shields, who keep them as hostages”. But he said their actions were nevertheless a “flagrant violation of international humanitarian law”.

Ziegler said he hoped the General Assembly would “condemn this strategy of the coalition forces” when he presents his report on the right to food in New York on 27 October.

Bomb blast near Durga puja pandal in Bangladesh

DARSHA, 14 Oct — Two bombs exploded near a Durga puja pandal (a makeshift temple constructed during the Hindu festival of Navaratni) in Bangladesh’s eastern Narsingdi District, but none was injured, a police report said on Thursday.

The bombs exploded on Wednesday night at Ghoraadia Purabara in the district causing a wall to collapse, a private TV channel reported.

The government tightened security in 22,000 pandals across Bangladesh for the festival which ends Thursday with the immersion of idols of Goddess Durga in rivers criss-crossing Bangladesh. Hindus constitute some 12 per cent of Bangladesh’s 130 million people. — MNA/RBT

China-ASEAN Eminent Persons Group Meeting closes in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR, 14 Oct. — The Second Meeting of the China-ASEAN Eminent Persons Group Meeting closed here Thursday.

The meeting recalled and reviewed which will be held in Malaysia in December this year.

The meeting opened here Wednesday. Former Chinese vice-premier Qian Qichen, who is also the eminent person from the China side, and other ten emi-nent persons from the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) side attended the two-day meeting.

An Iraqi man looks at US soldiers securing the site of a road side bomb attack that targeted a US military convoy in Baghdad, Iraq, on 14 Oct, 2005.

US troops are taking a cavalier approach to the insurgency, suggesting it would be no threat to US forces there and declaring: “Bring ‘em on!”

But more than two years later the country is gripped by a deadly Sunni Arab insurgency against the Shiite and Kurdish-led government and US troops and nearly 2,000 US troops have been killed.

Presented in July 2004, the report said prewar Iraq intelligence also concluded accurately that Saddam had no operational or collaborative ties with al-Qaeda and calculated the war’s impact on oil markets.

The CIA report, produced by a team led by former CIA deputy director Richard Kerr, was issued as the last in a series of three reports on Iraq intelligence. It is unclassified but has not been released publicly until now.

The two earlier reports remain classified.

US involvement in Iraq also came under fire on Wednesday from former UN weapons inspector Scott Ritter, who said the CIA’s faulty WMD intelligence only provided the pretext for a long-standing US policy of regime change.

MNA/Reuters

RAF “Tornado” crashes off Scottish coast, crew safe

LONDON, 15 Oct. — A Royal Air Force (RAF) Tornado fighter jet plummeted into the sea off the east coast of Scotland on Friday, the Ministry of Defence said, adding that the two crewmen ejected and had been rescued. The plane crashed 10 miles southeast of its base, RAF Leuchars, shortly after take-off, an MoD spokeswoman said. The reason for the crash was not known. — MNA/Reuters
China, Iran to discuss development of bilateral ties

BEIJING, 14 Oct—China and Iran will discuss the further development of bilateral ties during Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki’s visit to China, said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan here Thursday.

Mottaki arrived here Thursday morning on a two-day official visit as guest of Chinese Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing. Kong said at the regular Press conference that Chinese leaders will meet Mottaki and the two foreign ministers will hold talks.

The two sides will focus on furthering bilateral relations under the new circumstances and exchange views on international and regional issues of common concern.

He said the Iranian nuclear issue will be another topic between the two sides and China holds a supportive attitude toward the negotiations between Iran and the three European countries. China hopes all parties will properly settle the issue within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency through peaceful negotiations, especially about finding a long-term solution, said Kong.

He said China hopes Iran, the European Union and other parties concerned will break the deadlock with patience, flexibility and concrete and pragmatic steps, and resume dialogues, consultations and negotiations on this issue as early as possible. MNA/Xinhua

Iran rejects British charge of Teheran’s support for Iraqi riots

TEHERAN, 14 Oct—Iran on Thursday rejected as “unfounded” the British allegation that Iran had supplied explosives to guerrillas in Iraq.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hamid-Reza Asefi denied the allegation which was renewed recently by British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw, reported the official IRNA news agency.

Straw on Wednesday in a TV programme renewed London’s accusation that Iran had been supplying explosives and training personnel for the guerrillas in Iraq.

“The British Government criticizes others without providing any proofs to cover its failure and scandal caused by two of its soldiers arrested in southern Iraq,” Asefi was quoted as saying.

In September, the British troops launched a raid on an Iraq police station to free two British soldiers arrested in the southern city of Basra, which caused riots among local residents. Asefi denounced that the British Government should be responsible for the deepening crisis in Iraq, warning that no country would benefit from confrontation with Iran.

“Britain, instead of repeating awkward allegations, had better think of a plan to withdraw its troops from Iraq,” Asefi added.

Britain had earlier accused Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of supplying explosives technology to guerrillas in Iraq who had killed several British soldiers in bomb- ing attacks.

Teheran has termed the charge as “lies”, saying Iran is playing just a constructive role in Iraq.

MNA/Xinhua

Indian PM calls for donation for quake victims

NEW DELHI, 14 Oct—Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh called on people in the rest of India to generously donate for the victims of earthquake-hit areas on Thursday.

“I am sure Indian civil society will step forward and contribute to the relief and rehabilitation effort. I appeal to every concerned citizen of our Republic to come forward,” Singh said.

The Indian central government is giving all cooperation and assistance to India-controlled Kashmir government to provide relief and enable rehabilitation, he said, adding that the government also offered help to Pakistan.

The central government had promised to give 6.52 billion rupees (148 million US dollars) as relief fund to earthquake victims.

Meanwhile, according to NDTV, India will send the second consignment of relief material to Pakistan on Thursday. About 82 tons of relief supplies like blankets and tents will be sent from Delhi to Wagah border in Punjab Pradesh.

MNA/Xinhua

Heavy rain kills 22 in southern India

Hyderabad, 15 Oct—Heavy rain and strong winds have killed at least 22 people in southern India this week and another 10 were feared dead, many of them washed away or electrocuted, officials said on Saturday.

Eleven people, including four women, were killed along the coastal town of Ongole, also in Andhra Pradesh, as the region was hit by heavy rains triggered by a depression in the Bay of Bengal, officials said.

The state’s cyclone warning centre said heavy rains and winds with speeds of 50 km (30 miles) per hour were likely to continue in the region into Sunday.

Several housing colonies were flooded in the coastal town of Ongole, also in Andhra Pradesh.

More than 75 people were killed due to electrocution, house collapses and drowning in Andhra Pradesh last month after a storm brought heavy rains and flooding.

MNA/Reuters

Five people die in collapsed Barcelona building

MADRID, 15 Oct—Five people died when a three storey 18th century building collapsed in Barcelona, northeastern Spain, on Saturday, officials said.

Twelve Moroccan men were in the building at the time, state radio quoted a government official as saying.

Emergency services rescued two seriously-injured people from the ruins and another two people escaped unhurt. Firemen were still searching for survivors.

MNA/Reuters

Tucson Marine dies after being wounded in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 14 Oct—A US Marine from Tucson has died of wounds he sustained in Iraq three months ago.

Master Sgt Kenneth E Hunt Jr, 40, died Wednesday at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. Hunt, from Tucson, received 24 July when the vehicle he was riding in struck an anti-tank mine while conducting combat operations against guerilla force in Al Taqaddum, Iraq.

Hunt sustained burns over 60 percent of his body. He is the 57th Arizona soldier to die in the Iraq war. Five Arizona soldiers have died in Afghanistan.

Internet
India's Prime Minister to visit Russia in December

NEW DELHI, 14 Oct—India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will pay a two-day visit to Moscow from December five for summit-level talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin to further consolidate the new momentum in the strategic partnership between the two countries.

To prepare the ground for the annual summit, External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh will undertake a three-day trip to Moscow from 26 October, official sources here said.

Natwar Singh will co-chair with his Russian counterpart the meeting of the Inter-Government Commission for Commercial, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural cooperation aimed at giving further impetus to bilateral ties in new areas.

During their September 16 meeting in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Putin had hoped that the Prime Minister

United Airlines flight delayed by flat tires in Shanghai

SHANGHAI, 14 Oct—A United Airlines (UA) flight was delayed Thursday afternoon due to two flat tires in Pudong Airport of Shanghai, sources with the airport said.

Flight UA 858, a Boeing 747-400 aircraft scheduled for San Francisco, was sliding on the runway to take off at 1:50 p.m. when the pilot found the aircraft was hampered in swerving and the crew showed the alarm signal.

After checking, the pilot found two flat tires in the back row of the under-carrige. Then the aircraft was stopped for emergency regular testing and some 300 passengers were asked to get off the aircraft.

The incident did not affect other flights, sources with the airport said.

UA is a large airline company based in Chicago.

China, Australia hold 9th defence strategic consultation

BEIJING, 14 Oct—China and Australia convened the ninth defence strategic consultation here Thursday to discuss international or regional security issues of common concern.

Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of General Staff of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA), chaired the consultation.

He pointed out that the annual bilateral consultation enables the two countries to exchange ideas over issues of common concern in the spirit of mutual respect and equality.

The consultation is conducive to the mutual understanding between the defence departments and military forces of both countries, further enhances their extensive cooperation and friendly cooperation, and promotes the overall development of bilateral relations, he said.

Ken Gillespie, Vice Chief of the Australian Defence Force, said during the consultation talks that Australia is willing to develop a strong relationship with China in an open and friendly manner.

The Australian side expressed their hope to strengthen military ties with the PLA through more mutual high-level visits, strategic consultations and exchanges and among military institutes from both countries.

The two sides also made consultations on combating terrorism, the prevention of weapons of mass destruction and participation in United Nations peace missions.

The China-Australia defence strategic consultation has been conducted once a year consecutively in Beijing or Canberra since 1997.

Pakistan quake brings US, Iranian airmen together

RAWALPINDI (Pakistan), 14 Oct—Old distrust was put aside at a Pakistani airfield on Thursday when US airmen jumped in to help unload an Iranian military plane that flew in with a mobile hospital for victims of a massive earthquake.

An international airlift is underway to help some 2.5 million people made homeless and an estimated 50,000 injured in the 7.6 earthquake and tsunamis from across Europe, the Middle East, China and Japan and the United States are part of the effort.

People watch the launching of China's second manned space mission in Hong Kong on 14 Oct. 2005.—INTERNET

Iranian President defends nuclear policy as wise, logical

TEHERAN, 14 Oct—Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has defended his Cabinet's nuclear policy as wise and logical, the official IRNA news agency reported on Thursday.

"In order to secure the Iranian nation's interests in the nuclear field, the government has moved wisely, patiently and based on a well-devised planning," Ahmadinejad said. He hailed a nuclear proposal he presented in mid-September at the UN General Assembly in New York as an offer having "disarmed Iran's enemies and promised to put forth genuine and new initiatives in confronting any new situation".

Ahmadinejad also reiterated that Iran "welcomes resuming negotiations on its nuclear programme patiently".

Fort Riley soldiers killed in traffic accident in Iraq

WASHINGTON, 14 Oct—Two Fort Riley soldiers are dead after their military vehicle collided with a civilian vehicle and overturned in Iraq. The victims of Wednesday's crash have been identified as Sergeant Donald Furman and Lorenzo Ponce Ruiz. Furman was 30 and lived in Burton, South Carolina, and Ponce was 26 and lived in El Paso, Texas.

The Pentagon announced their deaths Friday.

Both soldiers were assigned to the 24th Transportation Company, 541st Maintenance Battalion.

The deaths bring the total number of Fort Riley soldiers killed in Iraq to 58.—INTERNET

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MNA/Reuters

An Iraqi man checks a boy who was wounded by a roadside bomb that targeted a US military convoy in Baghdad recently.—INTERNET

Landing field prepares for return of “Shenzhou-6”

SIZIWANG BANNER (Inner Mongolia), 14 Oct—The last drilling is to be staged at the main landing field in Inner Mongolia on Thursday night to ensure the safe landing of China's second manned spacecraft, according to official sources.

At the landing field, located in Siziwang Banner (county) of Inner Mongolia, six helicopters and 14 special vehicles are ready for the recovery and rescue of the re- turn of “Shenzhou-6”.

MNA/Xinhua

Irish President defends nuclear policy as wise, logical

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"In order to secure the Iranian nation's interests in the nuclear field, the government has moved wisely, patiently and based on a well-devised planning," Ahmadinejad said. He hailed a nuclear proposal he presented in mid-September at the UN General Assembly in New York as an offer having “disarmed Iran's enemies and promised to put forth genuine and new initiatives in confronting any new situation”.

In this proposal, Ahmadinejad sug- gested that Iran involve foreign compa- nies in its uranium enrichment pro- gramme as a new confidence-building measure to guarantee peaceful and trans- parent nature of the programme.

Ahmadinejad also reiterated that Iran "welcomes resuming negotiations on its nuclear programme patiently".

MNA/Xinhua
China, Netherlands have great potential in tech cooperation

EINDHOVEN (The Netherlands), 15 Oct — China and The Netherlands which share increasingly close trade ties have great potential in scientific and technological cooperation, a Dutch official said on Wednesday.

Chris Buijink, director-general for Enterprise and Innovation department of the Ministry of Economic Affairs, said China has registered the most rapid economic growth in the world, and attaches more importance to technological innovation. The country’s investment in scientific research will probably surpass that of the European Union (EU) by 2010, according to the bloc’s estimates.

China’s growth provides a huge market for Dutch enterprises, and a great potential for the two sides to cooperate in technological innovation and scientific research, said Buijink.

Buijink was attending a Sino-Dutch economic forum here which attracted the participation of some 100 representa- tives from the Dutch Government, enterprises and scientific institutions.

The official added the Dutch Government has set up a scientific and technological office in Beijing to promote bilateral exchanges, and take an active part in technological cooperation programmes between China and the EU.

The bloc also hopes to strengthen technolog- ical cooperation with China for win-win re- sults, said Buijink.

Forum organizer Chen Yuesen said lots of Dutch enterprises are eager to gain access into the Chinese market due to low manufacturing costs and flexibility in scientific research there.

Chinese scholars and engineers in The Nether- lands can help them, especially the medium or small-sized ones, to improve their understanding of China and promote bi- lateral trade and technological cooperation, Chen said.

US rejects Katrina meals, offers them to others

WASHINGTON, 15 Oct — The United States on Friday offered needy countries more than 330,000 packaged meals donated by Britain to feed Hurricane Katrina victims but rejected due to a US ban on British beef.

State Department spokesman Adam Ereli said the “Meals Ready to Eat,” or MREs, had been held in a warehouse in Little Rock, Arkansas, for more than a month after US Agriculture Department officials said they could not be distributed in the United States because they contained British beef products.

“We are certainly, for our part, looking to dispose of these MREs that were offered in the spirit of friendship and charity. We are looking to dispose of them in the same way,” Ereli told a State Department briefing.

The United States bans the import of pro- ducts containing British beef because of fears of mad cow disease, a chronic, degenerative disease affecting the central nervous system of cattle.

An additional 33,000 MREs from Germany, Russia, Spain and France had also not been distrib- uted to hurricane victims because of US legal restrictions, Ereli said without elaborating.

More than 100 nations offered assistance to the United States after Hurri- cane Katrina devastated New Orleans and other US Gulf Coast communities on 29 Au- gust. The US relief effort to help victims of the hurricane was criticized as too slow and ineffi- cient and bogged down by bureaucracy and in- fighting among govern- ment departments.

Early on, there was a need for about 500,000 readily packaged meals and the State Department asked its embassies worldwide to seek food dona- tions. Britain was among the first countries to offer MREs.

Regional craft village fair to be held in Vietnam

HANOI, 15 Oct — Vietnam will organize the first Vietnam-ASEAN traditional craft village trade fair in December, the Trade Ministry told Xinhua on Friday.

The fair slated for 26 December in southern Ho Chi Minh City will mainly showcase handicrafts, woodwork, bonsai, food and foodstuffs produced by the 10-member ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations), China, Japan, South Korea and India at some 500 booths.

The event will help preserve and develop traditional craft villages, boost handicraft exports and promote tourism, said the ministry.

Vietnam shipped abroad handicrafts worth of 410 million US dollars last year, up 11.9 percent from the year earlier, mainly to Japan, South Korea, Chinese Taiwan, Germany and Australia.

The event comes amid Vietnam’s efforts to develop trade and economic relations with ASEAN countries, particularly with ASEAN member Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia.

Last year, the bloc’s total exports rose by nearly 20.6 per cent to 550.6 billion dollars, and imports surged by over 26.6 per cent to 492.3 bil- lion dollars, according to the ASEAN Secretariat.
There is a big dhammayon in our ward. The former members of the board of trustees of the dhammayon instead of giving priority to raising the trust fund for the building’s long-term development only concentrated on the routine task of holding the annual election. A few years later, the board with six members including myself, who have always systematically worked according to the rules for five years during which the amount of trust fund has increased to kyats countable in hundreds of thousands. At first, we faced a lot of criticism and slanders and even vandalism. But those disturbances gradually disappeared when all the people saw the marked development of the dhammayon. The ward people can now hold annual religious festivals joyfully and the aged can practise vipassana or meditation with peace of mind.

Here, I do not mean that the situation of our dhammayons and that of Myanmar is exactly the same. What is required for our nation is the understanding and seeing things most objectively. Myanmar was left behind in industrial and economic development as she had lived for over 100 years under colonial rule. And soon after she regained independence in 1948, there broke out multi-coloured insurgency for nearly 40 years during which it destroyed the productive forces including industries and public property and lives. The law of scientific political economy says that productivity changes according to the ups and downs in the productive forces. According to the law, judicial, legislative, social, education, health, economic and cultural sectors depend on the productivity.

Because of the laying down and the following of the wrong single party system and centralized economic system, the nation had to face political and economic hardships that ignited the 1988 unrest. In the absence of the administration during the unrest gave birth to anarchy and gang wars in which innocent people were killed and public property looted, and the nation was about to lose her independence and sovereignty. As the Tatmadaw could not remain indifferent, it had to take over the State duties and the task of solving the political and economic problems.

During the unrest, the people were clamoring for multi-party democracy and open-door economy, and the conviction of the Tatmadaw was that only the flourishing of democracy would guarantee national modernization and progress. Thus, the people and the Tatmadaw held the same view. Soon after it assumed State duties, the Tatmadaw made efforts for development of both infrastructure and superstructure, essential for political, social, education, health and cultural development. It made peace with 17 armed groups, an unprecedented achievement in the post-independence history of Myanmar. Thus the Tatmadaw’s development endeavours have reached the entire nation including border areas.

Professor Dr. John Bashley, Professor of political science of Singapore U Kyaw Yin Hlaing and resource person Morten Pedersen who have studied Myanmar’s changes for over 40 years attended the talks on the review of US-Myanmar relations held in Washington on 25 March 2004. Based on their experiences, the four pointed out that the US economic sanctions and pressures on Myanmar were neither constructive nor a support to democracy transition, but further worsened the people’s situation.

On 5 April 2005, Professor Robert Taylor and Mr Morten Pedersen, experts in Myanmar affairs, presented an independent report “Supporting Burma Myanmar National Reconciliation Process: Challenges and Opportunities” for the European Commission. The summary of the report is as follows:

During the past 25 years, 88 countries launched the democratization drives, but 12 returned to their own single party camp. Although elections have been held in Myanmar’s neighbours there has been no significant changes in leadership. It cannot be actually stated that a government representing the wishes of the majority could not emerge just holding an election.

The EU must recognize that achieving democracy in Myanmar is a long-term process, not a one off event, and revise its aims and strategic objectives accordingly. Whether we like it or not, the military government in Myanmar is part of the solution, and the failure to effectively understand and work with the government undermines the EU’s strategic and humanitarian objectives. Developing a long term, evolutionary approach to reform is needed to move the country forward to a civilian government and economic strength.

It is proposed that the EU should undertake the following steps to achieve national reconciliation in Myanmar:

On the diplomatic side:
1. Adopt the official name of the country.
2. Resume regular EU high level visits at a sufficiently senior level to ensure access to the upper levels of government.
3. Revise the use of sanctions, making them clearer with realistic benchmarks and obvious reciprocity.
4. Encourage the establishment of new institutions which, over time, may become independent agents of change.

In connection with the assistance Robert Taylor and Morten Pedersen said:
1. The Commission and Member States should develop an assistance strategy with associated funding.
2. Appoint a senior EU representative tasked with ensuring that the assistance strategy is appropriately implemented according to EU guidelines.
3. Lift the remaining political constraints on aid.
4. In implementing assistance, it is necessary to prioritize with attention to structural economic reform as well as key sectors vital to poverty alleviation and broad-based growth.
5. Encourage a normalization of the role of IFIs and UN agencies in the country in order to promote economic and political reforms.
6. Assist a comprehensive study by government officials and local economists to establish a national economic reform programme and identify assistance needs.
7. Re-establish the Myanmar Aid Group and secure financial support for structural adjustments, including exchange rate unification and privatization.
8. Give technical and financial aid for capacity building in economic ministries and institutions, supported by scholarships to European and Asian universities.
9. Initiate direct policy dialogue with the government and civil society in EU assistance priority areas including small scale agriculture, basic education, and community development. The European Union has a unique opportunity now to lead in a renewed and effective effort to help the people of Myanmar fulfill their aspiration for a freer and better life.

Asia-EU economic ministers meeting was scheduled to be held in September 2005 in the Netherlands. But when EU did not issue visa for Myanmar economic minister, all other ASEAN nations did not send their ministers to the meeting. They down-graded the meeting to official level. Concerning the matter, the Japanese foreign minister slammed the EU, and the Malaysian prime minister also criticized it, saying that the unity and sovereignty of each and every ASEAN member country had been protected, and that priority had been given to peaceful means in resolving disputes and problems. China, Russia, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, and Pakistan supported the ASEAN stance. In reality they showed the unity of Asia.

On the other side, former Czech President Vaclav Havel and Bishop Desmond Tutu are shooting that Myanmar is worse than the world’s worst countries, urging the UN to take action against her as she may spill trouble to the rest of Asia. Instead of presenting the report, they should mind their own business. The government opponents inside and outside the nation were showing support to the two men’s slanders. Havel and Tutu in reality are playing the same old tune of the external and internal opponents and the western powers wishing to install a puppet government in Myanmar, exaggerating as usual the so-called problems of prisoners, the 1990 election results, drugs, AIDS, refugees and the remnant racial armed groups. In my view their report will lead to fueling our nation’s problems as it totally lacks the objectives — unity, mutual understanding and national consolidation.

In this regard, I draw a conclusion that the report of political experts including David Steinburg and Robert Taylor who have systematically studied Myanmar affairs for three-to-four decades is constructive, based on objective conditions and compiled with goodwill; and that the report is fair, and the other hand just represents the destructive attitude of internal and external opponents, and is compiled with ill will to cause destruction to the nation.

(Translation: TMT)
Vidhura Drama Contest continues for second day

YANGON, 15 Oct — Maung Nyan Win and troupe representing Yangon Division took part in the Vidhura Drama Contest of the 13th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions held for the second day at the National Theatre on Myoma Kyaung Street this evening.

Chairman of the Leading Committee for Organizing the Performing Arts Competitions Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, member of the panel of patrons of the Organizing Committee Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, Vice-Chairman of the Leading Committee Deputy Minister for Culture Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Wai Lwin, Chairman of the Work Committee No 3 Military Region Commander Col Tint Hsan, members of the work committee and subcommittees, maestros and enthusiasts enjoy the contest.

Leader of the panel of judges U Chit Oo Nyo and party supervised the contest.

The Vidhura Drama Contest will be held for the third day and the drama troupe representing Mandalay Division will participate it at the same venue tomorrow evening.—MNA

Performing Arts Competitions continue...

Similarly, the music contest continued at Padonma Theatre. Three teams competed in the higher education level men’s orchestra team contest, and eight teams in the amateur level men’s orchestra team contest.

U Sein Sten and members of the panel of judges made supervision for the contest. The amateur level men’s dobet contest and the basic education level (aged 15-20) men’s dobet contest will be held at the same venue tomorrow.

Six contestants participated in the professional level men’s domin contest at Kanbawza Theatre, two women in the professional level women’s domin contest, four students in the basic education level (aged 15-20) boys’ domin contest, and the two girls in the basic education level (aged 15-20) girls’ domin contest. Chairman of the panel of judges Gita Lulin U Ko Ko and party supervised the contest.

On 16 October, the amateur level men’s xylophone contest and the basic education level (aged 10-15) girls’ xylophone contest will be held. — MNA

Course on praise of Three Gems concludes

YANGON, 15 Oct — The conclusion of the course on praise of the Three Gems organized by the working group of social affairs and culture under Yangon Division Women’s Affairs Organization took place at the organization on Banks Street here this morning.

It was attended by Patron of the organization Daw Khin Thet Htay, Chairperson Daw Khin Myo Thu and members, patrons of district WAOs, chairpersons and members of district and township WAOs, course instructors and trainees.

The patron of the Division WAO delivered a speech.

On behalf of the trainees, Daw Aye Sabei Htwe of Thakaya Township expressed thanks.

Daw Khin Thet Htay presented K 216,700 for the four-storey-building used as Dhamma training courses for laity, and K 216,700 for renovation of Shin Samanhe Dhamma Building through the officials.

Altogether 300 members of WAOs in the division completed the 5-day course. — MNA

Maung Kyaw Lin Naung of Shan State participates in dancing contest (men’s) at amateur level.

MNA

Objectives of 13th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions

— To vitalize patriotism and nationalism;
— To preserve and safeguard Myanmar cultural heritage;
— To perpetuate genuine Myanmar music, dance and traditional fine arts;
— To preserve Myanmar national character;
— To nurture spiritual development of the youths;
— To prevent influence of alien culture; and
— To strengthen national unity and Union Spirit.
Minister U Aung Thaung attends 2nd China-ASEAN Eminent Persons Group Meeting

YANGON, 15 Oct—Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung attended the preliminary meeting of the EPG member held at 8 am and the 2nd China-ASEAN Eminent Persons Group (EPG) held at 10 am on 12 October at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Tan Seri Dato Musa Hitam and Mr Qian Qichen jointly presided over the EPG meeting.

At the morning session, EPG members dealt with the report (draft) that was compiled based on resolutions passed at the first China-ASEAN EPG meeting and was to be submitted to the ASEAN-China Summit. Minister U Aung Thaung presented the Myanmar delegation’s attitude to the report (draft).

In the afternoon, the members with one voice approved the report to be submitted to ASEAN and Chinese heads and signed it.

The ex-Malaysian PM and the ex-Chinese PM delivered concluding remarks.

The Malaysian EPG member and the Malaysian co-chairman hosted a dinner in honour of the attendees at KLCC Petronus Twin Towers on 12 October evening.

MNA

Myanmar delegation arrives back

YANGON, 15 Oct—A Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung, who had attended the 2nd China-ASEAN Eminent Persons Group (EPG) held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 12 and 13 October, arrived back here by air this morning.

They were welcomed back at Yangon International Airport by Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, Minister for Education Dr Chan Nyein, Deputy Minister for Industry-1 Brig-Gen Thein Tun, directors-general and managing directors of departments and enterprises.

Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Kyaw Thu, advisor U Kyaw Myint to Ministry of Industry-1, deputy factory manager U Phyo Myint, Swe of Myanmar Textile Industries and head of session Daw Myat Thida Aye also arrived back at the same flight.

MNA

Coord meeting for performing arts competitions held

YANGON, 15 Oct—The work coordination meeting of the Work Committee for Organizing the 13th Myanmar Traditional Performing Arts Competitions was held at No 1 Transit Centre on Bayintnaung Road, Hlme Township this evening with an address by Chairman of the work committee Commander of No 3 Military Region Col Tin Tint Hsan.

Committee and subcommittee members, and team managers discussed the matters on the competitions sectorwise and Committee Chairman Col Tin Tint Hsan attended to the needs.

Next, medicines donation continued and the chairman of the committee accepted 500 boxes of provimin medicines worth K 150,000 of Assistant Manager U Chit Thein of the Myanmar Pharmaceutical Industries under the Ministry of Industry-1 do nated to contestants of the competitions.—MNA

Minister U Aung Thaung pose for documentary photo together with those attending the meeting.—MNA

Theingi Shwe Wah Silkware Boutique launched

YANGON, 15 Oct—Theingi Shwe Wah Silk Textile Enterprise of Amarapura Town opened its third branch Theingi Shwe Wah Silkware Boutique at No 24 on Narnattaw Street in Kamayut Township, Yangon, this morning.

Available at the boutique are a wide range of modern silk sarongs (men’s and women’s wears), scarves, and clothes. It opens from 9 am to 7 pm daily.

Those who want to purchase the quality products may dial 01-539346.—MNA

Minister U Aung Thaung extended greetings to Prime Minister Mr Qian Qichen at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

On the occasion, the Malaysian minister and meeting joint-chairman former Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Mr Qian Qichen extended greetings.

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MNA

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Sunday, 16 October, 2005

Completely Rich 13th

* The National Traditional Performing Arts Competitions
  In progress gloriously, the 13th.
  * From Upper and Lower Myanmar, left and right
    All assembled here, the 13th.
  * Brethren hold a get-together
    All unitedly, the 13th.
  * Show Myanmar’s capabilities to the world
    We have plenty, the 13th.
  * True patriotism, true national spirit
    Shows the correct path, the 13th.
  * True tradition, heritage
    Open out and show, the 13th.
  * Myanmar music, Myanmar dance
    So much of variety, the 13th.
  * National character
    Always safeguarded, the 13th.
  * Mind developed for youth’s interest
    Much can be done, the 13th.
  * Not to be eclipsed by foreign culture
    Quickly prevent, the 13th.
  * For unity of nationals
    Union Spirit on the rise, the 13th.
  * Honour of the 13th, never unending verse
    Show you are fully capable.

Dr Than Oo (Trs)
(Honouring the 13th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions.)

Tourism development, food promotion discussed

YANGON, 15 Oct—Chairman of Myanmar Chiefs Association Mr. Oliver E Soe Thet and Culinary Ambassador of the association U Than Lwin arrived back here yesterday after attending the 2nd National Congress of the Indian Federation of Cooks held in India from 2 to 5 October.

The chairman of MCA and the culinary ambassador took part in the discussions with the title, ‘Tourism in Food-Food in Tourism’ and exchanged the views on development of industry and food production between the two countries.

MNA

THEIN GI SHWE WAH SILKWARE BOUTIQUE LAUNCHED

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Minister U Aung Thaung extended greetings to Prime Minister Mr Qian Qichen at the Mandarin Oriental Hotel.

On the occasion, the Malaysian minister and meeting joint-chairman former Chinese Deputy Prime Minister Mr Qian Qichen extended greetings.
Commander, Mayor attend 14th Mayor’s Cup Walking Race for the Blind

YANGON, 15 Oct—Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin attended the 14th Mayor’s Cup Walking Race for the Blind to mark the International White Cane Day at the People’s Square on Pyay Road in Dagon Township this morning.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint and officials, Director-General U Thaung Hlaik of Sports and Physical Education Department and officials, Secretary of YCDC U Tin Soe and members and officials. A total of 598 contestants took part in the competition.

The contestants started their competition at the People’s Square and finished at the City Hall through Pyay Road, Phonegyi Road, and Maha Bandoola Street. Departmental personnel, members of social organisations and local people along their route in Dagon, Lanmadaw, Latha, Pabedan and Kyauktada Townships gave encouragement to the contestants.

At the prize presentation ceremony, the mayor gave a speech. Next, Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin and Deputy Minister for SWRR Brig-Gen Kyaw Myint presented prizes and gifts to those who took part in the 14th Mayor’s Cup Walking Race. Officials accepted the prizes and gifts and gave away souvenirs to the mayor and the deputy minister.

The wives of the mayor and the vice-mayor wore pairs of glasses to the blind children, student Ma San San Htwe of Kyymyinme School for the Blind spoke words of thanks.

Next, students from schools for the blind presented entertainment to the audience. After the ceremony, officials sent students from schools for the blind and blind persons to Shweshwein Amusement Park and the modern playground in Thakata Township for their relaxation.

MNA

Cup Walking Race for the Blind.

The photo shows 598 blind persons taking part in 14th Mayor’s Cup Walking Race for the Blind — YCDC

Work coord meeting of NPED Ministry held

YANGON, 15 Oct—Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development held a coordination meeting at National Archive Department yesterday, attended by Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for NPED Col Tharein Zaw, directors-general, deputy directors-general and officials of the departments and enterprises under the ministry.

First, the minister made a speech. Afterwards, officials reported on measures being taken and future plans and the deputy minister gave a supplementary report. Next, the meeting ended with concluding remarks by the minister.

MNA

Two aftershocks happen in less than 9 hours in northern Pakistan

ISLAMABAD, 15 Oct—Another aftershock, the second in less than nine hours, shook areas of northern Pakistan on Thursday, but there was no report of any casualties, the earthquake centre said on Friday.

The intensity on Richter Scale was recorded at 5, the meteorological department said.

The epicentre was 200 kilometres north of Peshawar, it said.

MNA/xinhua

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Earthquake</th>
<th>Magnitude</th>
<th>Depth</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>14 Oct</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>85 km</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aftershock</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>50 km</td>
<td>Peshawar</td>
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</table>

Aftershock hit the already most affected areas in Mngarhur District at about 10 pm on Thursday night.

The first aftershock hit many parts including Islamabad at 1:25 am on Thursday morning, forcing the people to spend night in open.
After a heart attack, many continue to smoke

New York, 15 Oct — Fewer than half of cigarette smokers quit after experiencing a first cardiac event, according to a survey of Europeans. One in five continue to light up despite personal advice from their doctor to stop smoking, the survey shows.

It is “unbelievable” that so many people continue to smoke after a life-threatening event for which smoking is a major risk factor, Dr Wilma Scholte op Reimer said in a statement. She wonders whether they are “truly aware of the risk that they are taking”.

Clearly, there is still a need to develop effective smoking cessation programmes, she and colleagues note in the latest issue of the European Heart Journal.

For the survey, researchers interviewed 5,551 heart patients in 47 hospitals in 15 European countries more than one year after the event or condition that landed them in the hospital, namely heart bypass surgery, balloon angioplasty (for clogged arteries), a heart attack, or a type of worsening chest pain called unstable angina.

The interviewers asked participants whether they had smoked in the 30 days prior to being admitted to the hospital and whether they currently smoked. Those who denied smoking took a breath test for carbon monoxide, just to be sure. Scholte op Reimer, from Erasmus Medical Centre in Rotterdam, and colleagues report that nearly one quarter (21 per cent) of the 5,551 survey subjects were still smoking after the cardiac event.

Virtually all (99 per cent) of the 2,244 individuals who smoked before the heart event had been advised by their doctor to stop, but only 48 per cent actually stopped.

Smokers younger than age 50 were less likely to quit than older smokers. Those with angina (chest pain) were also less likely to give up smoking than were those who had suffered a heart attack.

This latter finding is worrisome, Scholte op Reimer said, because it hints that chest pain patients may not be aware that they are at heightened risk of suffering a heart attack.

In reality, the long-term risk of death in chest pain patients is comparable to that of heart attack patients.

Mysterious disease hits waterfowl in Iran

Paris, 15 Oct — A mysterious disease hit waterfowl in west Iran, leaving thousands of dead birds, the cause is still unknown, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) said here on Thursday.

“A high mortality has been observed among wild waterfowl in Poldasht (in West Azerbaijan Province)” said the Paris-based organization on its website. It noted that there was no pathological agent identified nor particular lesion appeared at the autopsy and that weakness and death are only signs of this affection.

The OIE said a total of 3,673 wild waterfowl had died since the phenomenon was found on 2 October, said the Iranian authorities, which have quarantined the region.

Iranian veterinary services are asked for test over bird flu research and further information about the disease. — MNA/Xinhua

Air-conditioner unit, possible source of Toronto disease outbreak

Ottawa, 15 Oct — A roof-top air conditioning unit is likely the source of the deadly legionnaires’ disease outbreak that has killed 17 in Toronto, Canadian health officials said on Thursday.

An air conditioner could easily spread illness as the bacteria could spread through condensed water droplets that form during the cooling process, Dr David McKeown, the city’s medical officer of health, told reporters.

“That aerosol, including the bacteria, could get sucked into a building’s air conditioning system and could float down on the street in front of a building and be inhaled by someone passing by,” McKeown said.

He briefed reporters on the development of the investigation into the cause of the disease at Seven Oaks, home for the Aged in East Toronto.

Air conditioning units at the nursing home and a nearby seniors’ apartment building have been taken off line for investigation. Test results are expected to be ready in about a week, said McKeown.

McKeown’s comments came less than 24 hours after the city’s health department announced that two patients with no connection to the nursing home are now recovering from the le- gionnaires’ disease. McKeown asserted that the risk of a further outbreak is “extremely low”, because the new cases are part of the same outbreak in the nursing home.

Air conditioning units at Seven Oaks began in late September and sickened more than 100 people, including residents, employees and visitors to the nursing home.

There have been no new deaths since last Fri day, but the home remains closed to new admissions and most visitors.

MNA/Xinhua

Arthritis drug effective against psoriasis

London, 15 Oct — A drug for rheumatoid arthritis can relieve the suffering of patients with moderate to severe psoriasis for a year, researchers said on Friday.

They found that infliximab, which is marketed under the name Remicade by Johnson & Johnson in the United States and by Schering-Plough Corp in other markets, improved symptoms of the chronic skin condition that affects 2 per cent of the popula tion in western countries.

“This is the first study to show that the very rapid and dramatic improvement that you see with psoriasis can, in the majority of patients, be maintained over at least the medium term — over the course of a year,” said Professor Christopher Griffiths, of the University of Manchester in England.

Previous trials have only looked into the impact of the drug on psoriasis over a short period of about 12 weeks. The study published in The Lancet medical journal also showed patients saw a significant improvement in one of the most disturbing features of psoriasis: nail disease.

“Up until now it has been extremely difficult to treat,” Griffiths told Reuters. He and his colleagues compared the effects of the intravenous treatment to a placebo, or dummy drug, on 378 patients with the illness. Each patient was given three intravenous infusions of the drug or a placebo over six weeks and then every eight weeks for nearly a year. After less than 3 months on the treatment, 80 per cent of the patients showed at least a 75 per cent improvement, compared to three per cent in the placebo group.

MNA/Reuters

Next Bond to be revealed, ending months of mystery

London, 15 Oct — The next man to play super spy James Bond is due to be revealed on Friday, and Englishman Daniel Craig is favourite to take over from Pierce Brosnan on Her Majesty’s Secret Service.

Craig, 37, who would be the first blond Bond, is one of dozens of actors linked to the role of the world’s most famous secret agent. The announcement in London will end months of speculation over the casting.

Other contenders have included Britons Clive Owen and Jude Law, Australia’s Hugh Jackman and Croatia’s Goran Visnjic.

Irishman Brosnan has not been ruled out, but recent comments about his surprise at being dropped made it likely that the most successful 007 to date at the box office will be hanging up the famous black tuxedo.

MNA/Reuters

Oscar-winning director Roman Polanski receives a Lotus Award at Bangkok’s World Film Festival at Sala Chalermkrung Theatre in Bangkok on 14 October, 2005.

MNA/Reuters

Bollywood actress and model Katrina Kaif smiles after she was announced the winner of Blitsex-India’s Most Beautiful Lips contest-2005, in Mumbai, India, late on 13 Oct, 2005.

INTERNET
Research findings show Mexico immune from bird flu attack

MEXICO CITY, 14 Oct— Research findings by a group of Japanese experts showed that Mexico does not have the conditions whatsoever for a possible outbreak of bird flu, Mexican Ministry of Agriculture, Cattle and Rural Development in a communiqué on Wednesday.

The commune said Mexico prohibits the import of poultry products such as chickens, hens, eggs and turkeys from infected countries.

It also said Mexico, the world's largest producer of poultry, is home to more than 3800 poultry farms, where 260 million chickens are hatched every 45 days on average.

In order to protect this sector, Mexico has drawn up plans to prevent the outbreak of bird flu in all the 32 states.

According to the pact on economy the agreement signed by Mexico and Japan, the two countries trade with each other poultry, eggs and poultry vaccine. birds and poultry vaccines that might spread bird flu viruses.—MNA/Reuters

Panic prevails as thick smoke engulfs Lagos

LAGOS, 14 Oct—Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu on Wednesday ordered immediate closure of all public schools as a result of thick smoke that engulfed a large section of Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria.

In a statement, Tinubu also called for temporary suspension of academic activities in all public and private primary and secondary schools without boarding facilities.

The gas, which was whitish in colour, discommoded the eyes and made breathing difficult when inhaled.

He appealed to companies and institutions to permit their staff with respiratory problems to go home immediately and take care of their health while the smoky situation persisted.

He also appealed to all Lagosians to ensure effective ventilation of their homes and work places by opening their windows and doors so that the smoke would not concentrate in them.

The governor said the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASPANA) had dispatched teams of officials to various parts of the city to measure the gas content in the air and trace the source of the high smoke.

According to LASPANA, the source of the discomfiting gas is from the Atlas Cove which hosts Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation jetty from where imported fuel is pumped to the southern part of the country.

In a televised broadcast in Lagos, LASPANA General Manager Adebisi Adebisa appealed to the public to be calm and assured that the agency was doing everything possible to trace the origin of the gas.—MNA/Reuters

Global cooperation urged in fighting against bird flu

SINGAPORE, 14 Oct— US and WHO officials on Wednesday stressed the need for global cooperation in fighting against bird flu, which has killed in Asia some 50,000 people and millions of fowls.

Speaking at a press briefing in the US Embassy here, US Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs Paula Dobriansky said countries need to work together again to face the latest avian flu threat.

"The threat is both real and formidable but we need to face it successfully. And to do so, we must face it together," said Dobriansky.

She added that this includes the rapid sharing of samples for testing and information, as well as enhanced surveillance for a bird flu outbreak.

The US official also stressed the importance of transparency in reporting bird flu cases.

On the same occasion, Lee Jong-wook, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), said that over the past three years, they heard of the avian flu in Thailand, Vietnam and now Indonesia. Then it went to Romania, Russia and Kazakhstan.

They all saw these tell-tale signs and have been working on it, but now they need concrete actions.

MNA/Reuters

Turkey culls over 7,000 poultry to rein bird flu

ANKARA, 14 Oct— The Turkish Agriculture and Rural Affairs Ministry said on Thursday that 7,626 poultry have been culled since bird flu cases were reported in Manyas Town of northwestern Balikesir Province.

The ministry said it will file a complaint against people who still refuse to cull their poultry in the region after compensation has been increased to 750,000 US dollars.

No new bird flu cases have been reported in Turkey so far, the ministry added.

Bird flu was firstly reported in Turkey when a total of 1,800 turkeys died in a farm in Kiziksa hamlet of Manyas starting from 1 October.

Turkey has culled thousands of poultry and established quarantine zones last Sunday to stop the spread of the flu.

Bird flu cases have been found in the Far Eastern countries for the past two years and the H5N1 bird flu strain has killed more than 60 people in Asia since 2003.—MNA/Xinhua

Bird flu found in Romanian duck samples

BUCHAREST, 14 Oct— A strain of avian influenza has been detected in samples from Romanian ducks, the chief veterinarian said on Thursday.

Chief veterinarian Ion Agafitei said scientists detected the H5 bird flu virus in samples taken from three ducks found in Danube delta.

"We eventually isolated the avian flu virus in the samples taken from the three ducks," Agafitei told Reuters by telephone.

Agafitei declined to elaborate on the findings because he was headed for an emergency meeting relating to the issue.

The finding contradicts comments from the European Commission on Wednesday, which said bird flu had not been found in Romanian ducks and will raise fears that the deadly virus has finally reached Europe.

Preliminary tests last week on three ducks in Romania's Danube delta near the Black Sea proved positive and raised fears that the disease had entered Europe.

The Commission also stressed the importance of enhanced surveillance for a bird flu outbreak.

The EU executive said recently that the virus has not been found in the state of Romania's poultry sector.

The Dutch government also expressed concern about the virus spreading through Mediterranean countries, which has been seen in Italy.

The mission was in contact with the Italian authorities, who have also confirmed the presence of bird flu in the region.

MNA/Reuters

Hungarian police bust euro coin forgery operation

BUDAPEST, 14 Oct— Hungarian police have broken a euro coin-forgery operation, arresting two people and seizing coins and equipment, the country's National Investigation Bureau said on Wednesday.

Department chief Istvan Orosz told a news conference that the raid on 6 October on a building outside the capital Budapest netted 2,659 two euro coins, together with 15,540 centrepieces for the coins, plus machines and plates.

A Hungarian and a Romanian were arrested and police also found plates for 50 euro cent coins, he said.

Most of the coins were marked as originating from Austria and Germany, and an official from the Hungarian Central Bank said that the coins would have fooled ordinary people, but not coin machines.

MNA/Reuters

A visitor to the Science Museum in London studies a Fangtooth fish on 14 Oct, 2005.—INTERNET
China’s 3G not to follow international standards

CHONGQING, 14 Oct — China should focus on mobile communication market development and technological renovation without pursuing international 3G standards, say experts at the ongoing 2005 Global Mobile Congress held in southwest China’s Chongqing Municipality.

“In a broad sense, the industrial standard and the international standard are two standards recognized worldwide,” said Lu Wei, a Chinese mobile communication expert.

“The corporations which lead an industry to dominate the establishment of the industrial international standard, however, are determined by their prestige in the world,” explained Lu.

“If China leads the world in mobile communication, its industrial standard will be acknowledged as the international standard. This has been a consensus among developed countries,” added Lu. According to the expert, China’s homegrown technology standard for 3G, TD-SCDMA, has good prospects. If all of Chinese mobile phone holders use this technology, it will become a virtual international standard, because foreign companies which want to share China’s vast mobile communication market will have to accept this standard.

China, which has the world’s biggest mobile phone market with 35 million users, has been pushing for development of its 3G standard TD-SCDMA as one of the three international 3G standards. The other two are WCDMA in Europe and CDMA2000 in the United States.

MNA/Xinhua

Japan mulls joint development of new “Kliper” spacecraft

TOKYO, 14 Oct — Russia has asked Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAEA) to participate in its new Kliper spacecraft development programme, a senior JAEA official said on Thursday.

Kiyoshi Higuchi told reporters that the JAEA has started collecting information on the programme and will decide by the end of the year whether to accept the request.

He hinted that the agency is willing to participate in the basic development, which will start in January next year. The Kliper, a successor to the Soyuz spacecraft, will be able to accommodate six astronauts, up from three for the Soyuz, and allow them to be in space for about 10 days.

The new spacecraft is chiefly designed to transport people to and from a space station, while being used also for scientific purposes and space tourism.

The European Space Agency is also considering to take part in the joint development and Japan’s participation would enable Russia, Japan and European nations to operate an international space station without relying on the United States, the official said.

The US National Aeronautics and Space Administration has said it will retire the space shuttle by 2010, and plans to return astronauts to the moon by 2018 in a vehicle designed to replace the space shuttle.

MNA/Xinhua

China reaches world level in spacecraft-recovery technology

BEIJING, 14 Oct — China is able to ensure a safe return of its second manned spacecraft Shenzhou-6 as it has reached the world level in recovery technologies, Hou Ying, chief designer of the manned spacecraft landing system, said on Thursday.

The landing system has been upgraded along with the development of the manned spacecraft, Hou said in an exclusive interview with Xinhua.

When China launched Shenzh-1 an unmanned spacecraft in 1991, there was only one landing field, and an emergency landing ground was added for Shenzhou-2 ten years later.

In March and December of 2002, when China launched Shenzhou-3 and Shenzhou-4 space vehicles respectively, a standby landing field and offshore landing sites for emergency landing were used.

When Shenzhou-5 was put in orbit two years ago, the landing system had been quite perfect, Hou said. The rescue squad arrived at the landing field in less than half minute after the spacecraft landed, he said.

Currently, the landing system is composed of the main landing field, the standby landing field, and a number of other emergency landing sites which are equipped with advanced radio measuring systems to help monitor the movements of the return capsule.

These sites have aerial rescue squads equipped with helicopters, land rescue squads equipped with special vehicles, and medical squads consisted of medical experts.

According to officials, the last drilling for the recovery of Shenzhou-6 entry capsule will be conducted in the main landing field in Siziwang Banner (county) of Inner Mongolia. Thursday night. — MNA/Xinhua

Big stars are born near Milky Way’s black hole

WASHINGTON, 14 Oct — Dozens of massive stars, destined for a short but brilliant life, were born less than a light-year away from the Milky Way’s central black hole, one of the most hostile environments in our galaxy, astronomers reported on Thursday.

On Earth, this might be a bit like setting up a maternity ward on the side of an active volcano. But researchers using the Chandra X-ray Observatory and other instruments believe there is a safe zone around black holes, a big dust ring where stars can form. Black holes, including the one at the centre of our galaxy, are monstrous matter-sucking drains in space, with gravitational pull so strong that nothing, not even light, can escape once it comes within the hole’s grasp.

These young stars, however, are just far enough away to be held in orbit around the hole much as planets are kept in orbit around the sun, according to Sergei Nayakshin of the University of Leicester, Britain.

At less than a light-year’s distance, the 50 or 100 massive young stars are quite close to the black hole, but not close enough to be drawn in, Nayakshin said in a telephone interview.

A light-year is about six trillion miles (10 trillion kilometres), the distance light travels in a year. By comparison, Earth is about 26,000 light-years from the galactic centre where the black hole lies.

MNA/Reuters
Former Real Madrid president Sanz buys Parma

Rome, 15 Oct—Former Real Madrid president Lorenzo Sanz should be confirmed as the new owner of Parma in the next few weeks, after handing over a cheque for 20 million euros (23.98 million US dollars), the Serie A club has announced.

Parma have been searching for a buyer since their parent company, Italian food group Parmalat, collapsed in December 2003 amid an accounting fraud scandal. The hunt seemed to be drawing to a close last month when Sanz made an initial payment of 7.5 million euros on the full price of 27.5 million, but he will not be officially declared the owner until the new cheque clears.

“The transfer of ownership of the shares in Parma FC will not take place until the cheque is cashed,” said a statement on the club’s web site on Friday.

If the deal goes through, Sanz would become the first non-Italian owner of a Serie A club.

The 52-year-old was president of Real Madrid from 1995 to 2000, during which time the team won the Primera Liga in 1997 and the Champions League in 1998 and 2000. Parma’s fans hope he can revitalize their side’s fortunes.

The personal wealth of the Tanzi family, which owned dairy company Parmalat, made Parma one of the strongest clubs in Italy during the 1990s when they were twice runners-up in Serie A and won the UEFA Cup in 1995 and 1999.

The demise of Parmalat, founded by Calisto Tanzi, led to the departure of many of the club’s top players and hit results on the pitch.

Last season Parma came dangerously close to losing their top-flight status, beating Bologna in an end-of-season playoff to avoid relegation.

They have struggled again this term and are 16th in the 20-team top division with four points from six matches.—MNA/Reuters

China display skill in play with Germany

WUXI, 15 Oct—Despite the defeat of 0-1 to Germany, China’s national soccer team displayed “skillful tactics” that were rarely seen in previous competitions of men’s soccer in China, said a senior Chinese soccer official here on Thursday.

China played with Germany in the western city of Hamburg, Germany, in a friendly on Wednesday and was defeated by the latter 0-1.

The game took place in high speed and strong offensives from both sides and Chinese players presented a performance with high skills, said Xie Yalong, head of Chinese soccer governing body.

Although the play was in early morning Beijing time, “the excellent game dispelled my sleepiness”, he said.

Some Chinese players, who are playing in foreign clubs, showed quality of professional soccer players and their performance had a model role for their teammates, said the official.

Some players who are playing in China also had good presentations. Xie praised Zheng Zhi, the core of Chinese midfield, saying he had several “creative” passes in speedy confrontations with rivals and “looked somewhat like a football star”.

Ferguson tells Blatter to get his priorities right

MANCHESTER (England), 15 Oct—Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson believes FIFA’s president Sepp Blatter should concentrate on more important issues than the behaviour and handling of striker Wayne Rooney.

Blatter, speaking in a BBC radio interview on Thursday, said Rooney should be called to order for his lapses of discipline and that Ferguson and England manager Sven-Goran Eriksson should take a harder line in dealing with the teenager.

“I think they (FIFA) are quite happy to take up smaller issues, like talking about a player at Manchester United who is 19 years of age, rather than pursue the really important issues in the game at this present day,” Ferguson told reporters on Friday.

Rooney had an on-field spat with England captain David Beckham in a match against Northern Ireland last month before being sent off for sarcastically applauding the referee in a Champions League match against Villarreal.

Ferguson, however, believes Blatter and soccer’s world governing body have more important matters to consider.

“He is in a very influential position and I think people do listen to what he has got to say,” Ferguson said.—MNA/Reuters

Pitchev inversion halts replayed Brazilian match

RIO DE JANEIRO, 15 Oct—The replay of a Brazilian championship match declared void by a match-fixing scandal was itself abandoned after a pitch invasion which followed a controversial penalty.

Santos fans ran onto the field at the Vila Belmiro stadium after Carlos Alberto converted the kick to put Corinthians 3-2 ahead in the 89th minute of Thursday’s return. Santos, the defending champions, had won the original game 4-2 but the result was declared void after the referee, Edison Pereira de Carvalho, was suspended on allegations that he took bribes from an illegal gambling ring to manipulate results.

Some 11 Brazilian championship games at which Carvalho officiated are being replayed, even though public prosecutors say that he did not attempt to swing every match he refereed.

Corinthians coach Antonio Lopes blamed Santos midfielder Giovanni for the confusion on Thursday.

When Santos re-started the game after the third Corinthians goal, Giovanni juggled the ball and then hoofed it into the crowd in an apparent sign of protest.

“He incited the supporters against the referee”, said Lopes. Almost immediately, Carlos Alberto was sent off for clashing with Santos goalkeeper Saulo, who was not dismissed, and fans invaded the pitch, forcing the teams to flee to the dressing-rooms.

Corinthians returned a few minutes later but Santos did not come back out and the referee abandoned play when more fans ran onto the field.

Brazilian media said fans clashed with police outside the ground, damaging cars. Around 20 people were reported injured, none seriously.

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Criminal suspects arrested for spreading information on Internet

BEIJING, 15 Oct — One hundred and one criminal suspects have been arrested since Chinese police started to crack down on what it deems to be obscene Internet activity this August, according to a Press release from the Ministry of Public Security here on Thursday.

The release said the Internet has been exploited by illegal chat rooms that recruit for sex movies. “This behaviour has severely polluted the Internet environment, done harm to juvenile’s physical and mental health and caused strong public anger,” the Press release said.

The special crackdown was jointly initiated by the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Information Industry and the Information Office of the State Council in August.

To date, 1,568 pieces of evidence have been obtained, from which 76 criminal cases have been put on file, yielding the 101 apprehended criminal suspects.

Chinese police authorities are intensifying their crackdown on Internet “obscenity” to purify the Internet environment. — MNA/China

Member of Hsinbyume Home for the Aged

Administrative Board U Chit Myaing accepts K 100,000 donated by Daw Mya May and family of No 134, Myoma Ward of Mogok recently, in memory of late U Thaung. — it

Standard Chartered donates $1m to earthquake victims in Pakistan

HONG KONG, 15 Oct — Standard and Chartered (Pakistan) will donate one million US dollars to relief earthquake victims in Pakistan, the Group announced in a Press release reaching here on Friday.

Half of the donations will be given to the Pakistani relief efforts and the remaining money will be used to support rehabilitation activities over the coming months, it said. MNA/China

WEATHER

Saturday, 15 October, 2005

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin State, rain or thundershowers have been isolated in Sagaing, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions, widespread in Chin State, Mandalay, Magway and Ayeyawady Divisions and scattered in the remaining areas with locally heavyfalls in Magway Division and isolated heavyfalls in Mandalay and Ayeyawady Divisions.

The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Pathein (5.24 inches), Kalay (2.80 inches), Pakokko (2.60 inches), Kyauktaw (2.40 inches), Mrauk (1.89 inches), Kyauktaw (1.81 inches), Nyuang-U (1.65) inches, Magway (1.38 inches), Monywa and Dawei (0.98) inch each.

Maximum temperature on 14-10-2005 was 93°F. Minimum temperature on 15-10-2005 was 68°F. Relative humidity at 09:30 hrs MST on 15-10-2005 was 82%. Total sunshine hours on 14-10-2005 was (8.4) hours approx. Rainfalls on 15-10-2005 were (0.08) inch at Mingsaladon, nil at Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfalls since 1-1-2005 were (96.77) inches at Mingsaladon, (96.54) inches at Kaba-Aye and (100.67) inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from North at (11.20) hours MST on 14-10-2005.

Bay inference: According to the observations at (06:30) hours MST today, yesterday’s low pressure area over Southwest Bay still persists. Weather is generally fair in the North Bay and partly cloudy to cloudy elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 16-10-2005: Rain or thundershowers will be widespread in Mon State, Ayeyawady, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions, scattered in Chin, Rakhine and Kayah States, Bago Division and isolated in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (80%).

State of the sea: Seas will be slight to moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Continuation of rain or thundershowers in the lower Myanmar areas.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 16-10-2005: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 80%.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 16-10-2005: Possibility of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is 40%.
YANGON, 15 Oct — Yangon Division Union Solidarity and Development Association held the Annual General Meeting 2005 at its hall this morning, with an address by Patron of Yangon Division USDA Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Alas present on the occasion were USDA CEC member Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Secretary of Yangon Division USDA U Aye Myint and executives, secretaries and executives of township USDAs in the division, members of social organizations and wellwishers.

First, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe delivered an address. Next, CEC member (in-charge of Yangon Division) Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin gave a speech. Afterwards, the commander gave away prizes to outstanding persons — Acting Secretary of Latha Township, and Regimental Sergeant Major Cho Mar Than of Shwepyitha Township Red Cross Brigade.

At the ceremony to honour offspring of executives at division, district and township levels, the commander presented prizes to five distinctions winner Maung Hat Htet Min, four distinctions winner Maung Hein Pyay Son, three-distinction winners Maung Than Zin Soe and Ma Yin Yin Shwe, two-distinction winners Ma Ni Ni Tha Win, Maung Kyaw Sithu and Maung Pyay Phyo Kyaw and one distinction winner Ma Zar Zar Oo.

Likewise, Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe gave away certificates of honour to U San Maung-Daw Kyi Kyi Than and family, U Than and family, Daw Lwin Lwin Oo and family and U Myo Min Zaw-Daw Kyi Kyi Mar and family who accepted and accommodated Japanese youth at their homes.

Next, the cash donation ceremony followed. CEC member Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, Yangon Division USDA Secretary U Aye Myint, Joint-Secretary U Tha Win and officials accepted K 3,440,000 from wellwishers.

Afterwards, the second session of the Annual General Meeting followed. Division Secretary U Aye Myint presided over the meeting together with members of the panel of chairmen Joint-Secretary U Tha Win and Division Executive U Tin Maung Win.

First, Meeting Chairman U Aye Myint gave an opening address. Division Executive U Min Thein submitted the Yangon Division USDA Executive Committee report, and Daw Lin Lin Naing of Dawbon Township the report on prevention against dangers posed by internal and external destructive elements through the united strength of the people.

Representatives of districts and townships took part in the discussions, and Division Executive U Aye Myint reviewed their suggestions.

The meeting passed four resolutions, approved one matter and put four matters on record. Later, the meeting chairman gave the concluding remarks and the meeting ended with the chanting of the slogans.

YANGON, 15 Oct — The amount of rainfall 66 mm (2.60 inches) observed at (09:30) hours MST on 15th October 2005 at Pakokku is the 24 hours new maximum rainfall record of the station for the month of October during last (9) years. The former record was 60 mm (2.36 inches) on 15th October 2003.

Sales of jade lots attract gems merchants

YANGON, 15 Oct — Patron of the Leading Committee for Myanmar Gems Emporium Minister for Mines Brig-Gen Ohn Myint and Chairman of the Leading Committee Deputy Minister U Myint Thein visited the sales of jade lots of the Mid-Year Myanmar Gems Emporium at Myanmar Gems Mart on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here this morning for the fifth day.

Gem merchants purchased 78 jade lots through competitive bidding from 3 pm to mid-night yesterday. A total of 114 jade lots were sold yesterday and another 55 jade lots today.