**Keep concepts and convictions of the entire national people on the right track**

In the 21st century, the whole world is on the road to consolidated progress. And, if we were disunited at a time like this, we would be like moving against the development trend.

In this regard, I would like to urge you to organize the entire national people to see that their concepts and convictions are on the right track to consolidate the foundation — non-disintegration of Union; non-disintegration of national solidarity; and perpetuation of sovereignty — with emergence of a peaceful, modern and developed nation as the objective.

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**Senior General Than Shwe visits Shwezigon and Hsinmyashin pagodas in NyaungU**

Yangon, 18 Dec — Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, together with member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-2 Lt-Gen Thein Sein, members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Tha Tha Tun Aung Myint Oo and Lt-Gen Tin Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Kyi Min, Commander-in-Chief (Air) Maj-Gen Myat Hein, Chairman of Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Central Command Maj-Gen Ye Myint, Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Tha Aye, ministers, senior military officers, the chairman of Magway Division Peace and Development Council, officials of the State Peace and Development Council Office and the departments, heads, visited the Shwezigon Pagoda in NyaungU, Mandalay Division, yesterday morning.

Senior General Than Shwe and party paid reverence to the Buddha images in the prayer hall of the pagoda. The Senior General offered “soon”, fruits, flowers, water and lights to the Buddha images and made cash donations to the pagoda through the chairman of the pagoda board of trustees. They went round the pagoda clockwise.

Senior General Than Shwe and party inspected progress of NyaungU and progress in renovation of the ancient pagodas and stupas in Bagan Archaeological Zone by car.

The Senior General and party also visited Hsinmyashin Pagoda and paid homage to the Buddha images.

Deputy Director-General of the Department of Archaeology (Upper Myanmar) U Aung Kyaw reported on progress in renovation of Hsinmyashin Pagoda and the ancient pagodas and stupas. The Senior General left necessary instructions. The Senior General donated cash to the pagoda funds thorough members of the pagoda board of trustees.

Independent Day commemorative features on Pages 6, 7 and 11.
PERSPECTIVES
Friday, 19 December, 2003

Let’s actively take part in regional and national development tasks

In order to bring parallel development to all regions of the Union, the government has been simultaneously implementing the development project for border areas and national races, the 24-region development plan and the five rural development tasks.

In the past, the Pakokku region was a far-flung area where living and transportation was difficult. Therefore, it was left behind other regions. But now, for the development of the region on the west bank of the Ayeyawady river including Pakokku, the government is trying to improve transportation by building new railways, motor roads and river-crossing bridges. Moreover, all the necessary measures are being taken so that Pakokku will become the capital on the west bank of the Ayeyawady.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe on 16 December met with members of Pakokku District Peace and Development Council, chairman of Pakokku, Dr Maung Maung, Yezagyo and Sokkyau Township Peace and Development Councils, district- and township-level departmental personnel, members of Union Solidarity and Development Associations and social organizations and townsenders. In his guidance to all those responsible and local people, Senior General Than Shwe said that, as the Pakokku region is one of the development regions, infrastructures necessary for the development of education, health, transport and economic sectors are being built not only for the Pakokku region but also for southern Chin State which is contiguous to the Pakokku region. Now, the Pakokku region is not what it used to be. It can be easily seen that the region is experiencing all-round development. As water is scarce in the region, the government has taken so that Pakokku will become the capital on the west bank of the Ayeyawady.

Moreover, all the necessary measures are being taken to call upon all the departmental personnel serving in the region to give opportunities for the local people.

Pakokku region. Now, the Pakokku region is a far-off region. In order to bring parallel development to all regions of the Union, the government has been implementing the development tasks being implemented in their interests.

The government is encouraging not only the agriculture sector but also the industrial sector. Therefore, new factories are being constructed to develop the region and create employment opportunities for the local people.

Acting on its part, is striving for the development of the Union, we would like to call upon all the departmental personnel serving in different parts of the nation to discharge their responsibilities well, to successfully implement the projects and plans laid down and to actively lead the people. People, on their part, should also lend themselves to the development tasks being implemented in their interests.

UMFCCI President meets Penang Ministers of Malaysia

YANGON, 18 Dec — President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry-UMFCCI K. Mo Niin and his party met with members of Penang Ministers of Malaysia.

Minister opens new school building of Sagaing School for the Blind

YANGON, 18 Dec — Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Mr Myint Sein Htwa attended the ceremony to open the new school building of the School for the Blind in Sagaing held near Mawshika Pagoda in Myohtat Ward, Sagaing, on 16 December morning.

Also present on the occasion were Deputy Commissioner of North-West Command/Col Tin Maung Ohn, Director-General of Social Welfare Department/Col U Myo Htwe and officials, division/divist/ township level departmental officials, USDW and Women’s Affairs Committee members, Sagaing Division MWCWA members, officials different education wellwishers, students, band troupe and pom pom troupe members of Sagaing BEHS-I.

Minister Maj-Gen Sein Htwa and Deputy Commissioner Col Tin Maung Ohn formally opened the new school building. Principal Daw Tin Tin, teachers and the students formally opened the billboard of the school. Afterward, the minister met with division staff officers and said the Blind can accommodate 50 students. The completely blind students and students of between 5 and 18 years are trained at the school. At the opening ceremony, the minister met with division staff officers and presented offers to Agga Maha Panda Sasadniraha Dhammacaryana Chancellory Sayadaw Maha Dhammakabha Bahuynaha-hitadhara Agga Maha Sayadaw Pyin Nyan of Mandalay and Sagaing divisions and staff. He gave instructions and heard reports.

After fulfilling the needs, the minister and party visited Sitagu World’s Buddhist Missionary University in Sagaing mountain ranges. They paid respect to the principal and presented offers to Agga Maha Panda Sasadniraha Dhammacaryana Chancellory Sayadaw Maha Dhammakabha Bahuynaha-hitadhara Agga Maha Sayadaw Pyin Nyan of Mandalay and Sagaing divisions and staff. He gave instructions and heard reports.

Yesterday morning, the minister visited the checkpoints of Immigration and National Registration Department at Mandalay International Airport and gave instructions.

MNA
Saddam Hussein should face the death penalty. 

Loud blasts mixed with the sound of women and children screaming inside the houses. An explosion at the gate of one compound shattered windows, cutting a 1-year-old baby with glass. US medics treated the injury while other soldiers handcuffed four men, who were later released.

The raid, launched before dawn and lasting until midmorning, targeted the city of Samarra, north of Baghdad. US officials say some 1,500 fighters operate in Samarra, making it one of the persistent hotspots in the so-called Sunni Triangle.

Samarra has been a bit of a thorn in our side," said Col. Nate Sassaaman. "It hasn’t come along as quickly as other cities in the rebuilding of Iraq. This operation is designed to bring them up to speed."

The coalition scored a major victory Saturday by nabbing Saddam, who officials revealed Wednesday was currently being held in the Baghdad area. But violence has continued in the capital and in predominantly Sunni areas west and north of Baghdad, once Saddam’s power base.

In the northern city of Mosul, as soldiers shot and killed a policeman Wednesday, police said. And Iraqi security forces there opened fire on pro-Saddam protesters, wounding nine, witnesses said.

In Baghdad, a fuel truck exploded after colliding with a bus at an intersection, killing 10 Iraqis and wounding 20 raising initial claims by Iraqi officials that it was a suicide bombing by Saddam loyalists. But US officials later said the blast was an accident, not an attack.

In the Samarra raid by some 2,600 troops, dubbed Operation Ivy Blizard, the 4th Infantry Division and Iraqi forces detained at least a dozen suspected guerrillas though others got away, apparently tipped off about the US raid.

In the city’s industrial zone, troops used even their Bradley fighting vehicles to break down the doors of warehouses, workshops and junkyards.

"Locksmiths will make a lot of money these days," said a US soldier laughing as he sat atop a Bradley.

As he helicopters flew over head, troops downtown fanned out in squads of 14 to storm several walled residential compounds, using plastic explosives to break in.

At one home, an explosion ignited a small fire. Elsewhere, a suspect was punched in the head and a soldier said: "You’re dead. You’re dead."

Troopers later moved on to the industrial area, where they found little. One military official said he suspected insurgents moved much of their equipment to farms outside town.

Two US soldiers stand guard on a street in Samarra, Iraq on 17 Dec, 2003. US forces killed three attackers and thousands of soldiers swooped on a town in a major crackdown on Wednesday as violence and instability gripped Iraq in the wake of Saddam Hussein’s capture.

Senior US official says Iraqi resistance displays signs of central coordination, funding

BAGHDAD, 18 Dec—The Iraqi insurgency is showing signs of central planning by former officials of Saddam Hussein’s regime figures who coordinate hundreds of miles apart and provide cash and bomb-making expertise to guerrilla cells, a senior US military official told The Associated Press Wednesday.

In some cases, ‘signature bombs’ are used, devices so similar their design suggests they came from the same source, the official said.

“We do individual cells will have the capability themselves to do that. They’re just too much alike,’’ the official said on condition of anonymity, describing the growing intelligence picture of the attackers.

Core strength of $500

The shadow overseers of the insurgency maintain communications with cells made up of a core of about 5,000 anti-US guerrillas, who, in turn, have recruited thousands of part-time fighters from Iraq’s mosques and its vast pool of unemployed and angry citizens, the official said.

The official cautioned the guerrillas displayed no signs of a strict command-and-control hierarchy in the conventional military sense, but did depend on a variety of local commanders who had received some guidance from above.

“It isn’t just one or two individuals who are saying, ‘On Friday this particular cell in Baghdad, you’re expected to do this operation.’ That would be a real exception to the rule,” the official said. “I’d expect it to be more along the lines of ‘These are the kinds of things we want to encourage you to do over the next two weeks.’”

Anti-American resistance

A briefcase of documents seized during Saddam’s capture of Saddam near the northern city of Tikrit clairvoyant

The division used data from the intelligence trove on Sunday and Monday to arrest key figures leading the insurgency in Baghdad, Hertling said. The intelligence also confirmed the existence of rebel cells whose presence was previously only suspected, he said.

“The thing we are very interested in is the extent to which he still may pull the strings,” the official said, referring to Saddam.

“We’ve got to make sure that if we do get anything out of him that we’re able to turn that rapidly into some kind of action.”

World divided over Saddam penalty

BAGHDAD, 18 Dec—The international community remains divided over whether Saddam Hussein should face the death penalty.

Iraqi Governing Council President Ahmad Chalabi said Wednesday the captured former Iraqi president should be tried by Iraqis and face execution.

But others, including the Iranian president, the UN Secretary-General, the European Commission and several European countries have voiced opposition to capital punishment.

Iran’s President Mohammad Khatami said,"I don’t like the death penalty, although, if there is one case where there should be an execution, the fairest case

Bradley fighting vehicles from 1-8, 3rd Brigade, of the 4th Infantry Division prepare to leave the industrial zone of Samarra, Iraq, on 17 Dec, 2003.—AP/Internet

"Goods and services"

The leadership also offers the rebels “goods and services” from a pool of $1 million to $1 million, which can be seen in the similarities in the attacks taking place in cities from Nasiriyah in southern Iraq, to Baghdad in the centre and Mosul in the north.

"They think it’s an insult to them that there are some kinds of talents and some kinds of activities that are more centralized,” the official said. “Money is one of those goods.”

Central coordination can be seen in the anti-US or pro-Saddam demonstrations that crop up simultaneously in cities across the country, and in the types of bombs and tactics used in ambushes, the official said.

"These are the kinds of things we want to encourage you to do over the next two weeks.”
Annan urges quick creation of Iraqi government

**United Nations, 18 Dec** — United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan called Tuesday for a quick creation of an interim Iraqi government through an “inclusive and transparent” process.

Addressing a UN Security Council open meeting, Annan said the capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein offered an opportunity for a new beginning in helping Iraqis to take control of their destiny.

“The task of restoring the effective exercise of sovereignty to Iraqis, in the form of a provisional government, is urgent,” Annan said at a Security Council open meeting.

“While there may not be time to organize a full and fair election for the purposes of this process, it is essential that the process leading to the formation of a provisional government is fully inclusive and transparent,” he stressed.

Annan noted that every segment of the Iraqi society should feel represented in the new government and none should feel excluded from the process leading to the holding of elections for a constituent assembly and Parliament.

“A credible and inclusive transition — one that broadens the base of support for the provisional Iraqi Government — offers the best hope of stability, and of political mobilization by Iraqis against the violence,” he explained.

Under an agreement reached in mid-November between the Iraqi Government and the occupying coalition, an interim Iraqi Government will be established by the end of next June and take over full sovereignty from the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA).

Annan said the United Nations is ready to play its full part in helping Iraqis resume control of their destiny and build a better future.

The UN chief reiterated that Saddam should be held to account for “his past deeds”, through a procedure that meets the highest international standards of due process.

“Accounting for the past will be an important part of bringing about national reconciliation — a process that is vital to Iraq and to all Iraqis,” he said.

South Korean protesters chant anti-war and anti-US slogans at a rally near the National Assembly, in Seoul, on 18 December, 2003. — **INTERNET**

China hopes to develop relations with Panama

**Panama, 18 Dec** — A Chinese envoy said here that China wishes to develop all-round relations with Panama despite the lack of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Yang Fajin, representative of the Commercial Development Bureau of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in Panama, said communications between the two peoples would be beneficial when meeting with Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso.

**MNA/Xinhua**

Turkey, Mongolia sign protocols to improve ties

**Ankara, 18 Dec** — Turkey and Mongolia on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding that foresees development of bilateral relations.

The memorandum was signed by visiting Mongolian Minister of Justice and Internal Affairs Tsrenden Nyamdorj and Turkish Justice Minister Cemil Cicek.

Improvement of economic relations among countries depends on strong legal relations, said Cicek, adding that law played a determining role in businessmen’s undertaking investments in foreign countries.

For his part, Nyamdorj said that relations between Mongolia and Turkey were good, adding that a safe legal atmosphere has to be formed to further improve the cooperation.

On Monday, Nyamdorj and Turkish Interior Minister Abdullah Aksoy signed an agreement in cooperation in fighting crimes.

The agreement involves cooperation in the fields of human smuggling, combating terrorism and cooperation in education. After the signing ceremony, Aksoy said both countries believed that international cooperation in fight against terrorism and human smuggling was very important.

**MNA/Xinhua**

WMO says global temperature in 2003 third warmest in record

**Geneva, 18 Dec** — The United Nations on Wednesday launched what it billed as a fun CD-ROM aimed at the “six to 96 age group” to spread knowledge of how the organization works.

The 10 US dollars disc, “Discover the UN and Have Fun” is to go on sale in UN bookshops and information centres around the globe. Using a game format, it pits the user against a “Terrible Bug”, representing the problems that the world body struggles to resolve — like refugee crises, wars and pollution — and tests their knowledge of development and environmental issues.

The CD-ROM was developed by the UN’s Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), whose acting deputy chief, Patrice Robineau said it would also show “that the UN is not just a debating shop but has an effect on almost everybody’s daily life”. So far only available in a bilingual English-French version, it will also be produced in other official UN languages — Spanish, Russian, Chinese and Arabic — and will be expanded to cover the work of specialized agencies for health, labour and other areas.

**MNA/Reuters**

Spain opposes death penalty for Saddam

**Madrid, 18 Dec** — Spanish Justice Minister Jose Manuel Vicent Michel asked Wednesday for a “fair trial, with every guarantee and without any impunity” for former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, but one which would avoid the death penalty.

The abolition of the death penalty should extend to every democracy, Michavila told the Press one day after United States President George W. Bush insisted that Saddam should face “the ultimate penalty” following his capture on Saturday.

In the remarks made before participating in the presentation of a book on telecommunications, television and the Internet, Michavila described the abolition of the death penalty in Spain in 1978 as an “ethical conquest”.

“It would be desirable” that this path “would extend in the Court of Europe and in the United Nations and in the globalisation and to every democracy,” the minister said.

**MNA/Xinhua**

UN launches CD-ROM for fun, education

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**MNA/Reuters**

Germany plans to press Baker on Iraq contracts dispute

**Berlin, 18 Dec** — Germany said Tuesday it hoped to use talks with US special envoy James Baker to persuade the United States to drop its refusal to grant major rebuilding contracts in Iraq to countries that opposed the war there.

But Defence Minister Peter Struck said the capture of Saddam Hussein would not prompt Berlin to offer to send troops to help stabilise Iraq.

In an interview with Reuters, Struck made clear that the dramatic weekend arrest of Saddam would not magically dispel the differences between the United States and Germany, which strongly opposed the invasion of Iraq last March. Relations had improved since the war ended but “have certainly experienced a slight darkening” since the United States last week announced it was shutting down war opponents like Germany, France and Russia from bidding for prime contracts worth 18.6 billion US dollars in Iraq.

Asked if the US move could be seen as revenge for that opposition, he said: “I can’t judge that. But I don’t consider this decision as smart.”

Struck said Germany would raise the issue in talks with Baker, who visits Europe this week to discuss debt relief for Iraq. Baker is due in Berlin on Wednesday.

“I hope the talks that James Baker will conduct in Berlin will bring a change in the stance of the US Government. I have no understanding for this position,” he said.

On German support for stabilising Iraq, Struck said nothing had changed with Saddam’s capture.

“We have offered to train Iraqi police and military, if there is a wish for that. That’s what Germany is offering in this area,” he said. “It makes no sense now to speculate over any change of stance.”

**MNA/Reuters**

Iraqi official says Saddam held in Baghdad

**Baghdad, 18 Dec** — The US military is holding Saddam Hussein in the Baghdad area, a member of the Iraqi Governing Council said Wednesday.

“He is still in greater Baghdad,” said council member Mouwafak al-Rubaie. “Maybe he will stay there until he stands trial.”

US officials have confirmed that the former dictator was at an undisclosed location in Iraq.

Al-Rubaie spoke at a news conference where council members issued a statement asking for Iraqis to seek reconciliation following the weekend capture of Saddam.

**INTERNET**
CONTINUING RESISTANCE AGAINST US TROOPS

Two US soldiers inspect the damage after a small explosive charge was used to blow the door of a store in the industrial section of Samarra, Iraq, on 17 December, 2003.—INTERNET

A US soldier guards the wreckage of a minibus after an explosion in Baghdad, on 17 December, 2003. A bomb beside a fuel truck set off a huge fireball in which at least 17 people were killed in Baghdad, as violence gripped Iraq in the wake of the capture of Saddam Hussein.—INTERNET

US soldier aims his rifle during clashes with supporters of former Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein in Mosul on 17 December, 2003.—INTERNET

Iraqi police inspect the site of an explosion in Baghdad on 17 December, 2003. The roadside bomb exploded next to a fuel truck in Baghdad on Wednesday, causing a huge ball of fire.—INTERNET

A US soldier from 1-8, 3rd Brigade, of the 4th Infantry Division uses a sledge hammer to break the padlock of a store in the industrial zone of Samarra, Iraq, on 17 December, 2003.—INTERNET

A US soldier searches an Iraqi before he enters the Tallil base in the southern city of Nasiriya. The man wants to make a complaint against the US army for material damage caused by coalition forces during the invasion of Iraq.—INTERNET

A US soldier searches an Iraqi before he enters the Tallil base in the southern city of Nasiriya. The man wants to make a complaint against the US army for material damage caused by coalition forces during the invasion of Iraq.—INTERNET
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Safeguard independence for its perpetuity

It is a common knowledge that because of the unity among the national races there emerged the prominent empires of Myanmar — the First Myanmar Empire, the Second Myanmar Empire, and the Third Myanmar Empire — in the world. And if we study the history of the late Yadanabon period, we can learn that resulting from the breaking up of the national solidarity and lack of unity among the national people, Myanmar lost her independence and her King Thibaw was taken away from the country by the enemy.

In reality, the national brethren are fully equipped with patriotism and Union Spirit. No enemy will be able to insult and intrude Myanmar if there is unity among all and the national races and national solidarity is kept always alive.

After the colonialists captured and took away King Thibaw, the Governor General of India, on behalf of the British Queen, declared on 1 January 1886 the annexation of Myanmar by the British Empire. Although Myanmar lost her independence, the colonialists were not able to suppress the patriotic spirit of Myanmnar and armed struggles of the Myanmar patriots. The removal of British General Pendergast from his post on 31 March 1886 serves as a significant proof to the fact. The reason: his failure to defeat the army of Myanmnar. The removal of Thibaw, the Governor of Myanmnar, by the British Empire.

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Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Images of Myanma history

The entire national people living through thick and thin in Myanmar under own kings for successive eras fought with unyielding spirit the colonialists who intruded Myanmar and trangressed national sovereignty and integrity.

The ceremony to mark the Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar took place in the residential compound of the then governor at an auspicious time of 6.30 am on 4 January 1948. On the occasion, the Union Jack was lowered and the Flag of the Union of Myanmar was flown before the very eyes of President Sao Shwe Thaik, Governor Sir Hubert Rance and guests to the accompaniment of National Anthem played by the State Band.

A representative of national races signed the Agreement at the signing ceremony of Panglong Agreement held in Panglong on 12 February 1947 in an effort to restore the independence.

Freedom has been restored through the united strength of national people.

A troop of soldiers marching to fight the colonialists received a tumultuous welcome of the national people in 1941.

May the voice of Independence Declaration of our Union of Myanmar as a sovereign State echo across the world.

Hpashwekyaw battle

National brethren fought tooth and nail the colonialists entering Hpashwekyaw village, northeast of Thayawady, at risk of their lives. Hpashwekyaw battle was prominent because the colonialists were defeated in it suffering heavy loss of lives.

Members of Myanma Tatmadaw made up of national people camped in Mepali village in 1942 to drive out the colonialists.
The 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment continues

YANGON, 18 Dec — The second day session of the Ninth ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment continued at the Sedona Hotel here this morning.

It was attended by delegations of Myanmar, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Republic of Indonesia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Republic of Philippines, Republic of Singapore, Thailand and Socialist Republic of Vietnam, the secretary-general and officials of the ASEAN, and officials of UN agencies and Germany based Hann-Seidel Foundation.

Next, delegations to the meeting issued the minutes and the joint-statement of the 9th AMME.

The Second ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting will be held tomorrow at the Sedona Hotel.

In the evening, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin hosted a dinner in honour of the delegations to the 9th AMME at the International Business Centre on Pyay Road.

Mayanmar Red Cross Society meets

YANGON, 18 Dec — The 54th Central Council Meeting of Myanmar Red Cross Society was held at the Institute of Nursing (Yangon) on Bogyoke Aung San Street here this morning.

Present on the occasion were members of the Central Council, the President of MRCS and executives, members of Red Cross Society supervisory committees of States and Divisions and guests.

MRCS Deputy Executive Director U Hla Myint acted as master of ceremonies.

MRCS President Dr Kyaw Win delivered an opening address.

MRCS Executive Director Col Aung Than (Retd) read out the minutes of the 53rd meeting and then they were approved.

Next, MRCS Secretary Dr Tun Sein read out the executive committee’s reports presented at the 54th meeting, and Col Aung Than (Retd) financial statements which were approved.

President Dr Kyaw Win recounted his experiences gained from the Partnership Meeting held in Hanoi, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the 28th International Conference held at Geneva, Switzerland.

It was followed by a general round of discussions. The executive committee assessed the reports. The president of the MRCS delivered concluding remarks.

The meeting continues tomorrow.

Our Three Main National Causes

— Non-disintegration of the Union,
— Non-disintegration of national solidarity
— Perpetuation of sovereignty

59th Anniversary Armed Forces Day Objectives

— To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the State’s seven-point policy programme
— To crush internal and external destructive elements hindering the stability and progress of the State through people’s militia strategy
— To implement border area development tasks and the five rural development tasks hand in hand with the entire people
— To build up a strong and efficient Tatmadaw to uphold ‘Our Three Main National Causes’
The 57th Anniversary Union Day objectives
— for all national races to safeguard the national policy — non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty
— to keep the Union spirit ever alive and dynamic among the national people
— for all national people to defend and safeguard the Union for its perpetual existence
— to prevent, through national solidarity, the danger of internal and external destructive elements undermining peace and stability of the State and national development, and
— for all national races to make concerted efforts for successful implementation of the seven-point future policy programme.

Declaration and resolution signed at 9th AMME
YANGON, 18 Dec — A ceremony to sign the Declaration on ASEAN Heritage Parks and Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development was held at the Sedona Hotel here at noon today.

It was attended by leaders of delegations of ASEAN member countries, deputy ministers, members of the delegations, the ASEAN Secretariat and officials, and officials of the international organizations.

First, leaders of the delegation ministers from the ASEAN countries signed the Declaration on ASEAN Heritage Parks and Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development. Then, leaders of the delegation ministers from the ASEAN countries signed the Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development, and Minister U Win Aung presented the declaration to ASEAN Secretary-General Mr Ong Keng Yong. Next, the leaders of the delegation ministers from the ASEAN countries signed the Yangon Resolution on Sustainable Development, and Minister U Win Aung presented the resolution to the secretary-general of the ASEAN. Later, leader of the Myanmar delegation Minister U Win Aung explained matters related to the establishment of the ASEAN Environmental Education Inventory Database. — MNA

Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition continues for second day
YANGON, 18 Dec — The Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition, organized by the Traditional Medicine Department of the Ministry of Health, continued for the second day at Tatmadaw Convention Hall on U Wisara Road today.

The portraits of Chairman of State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe together with his message, Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt together with their addresses were hung at the centre of the hall.

Chancellor of Thitagu World Buddhist University Honorary Professor of International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Saddhamma-jotikadhaja Maha Dhammakahtika Bahujana Hitadhara (Thabeik-aing) Thegon Sayadaw Dr Ashin Nanissara viewed round the exhibition. Over 18,000 people visited the exhibition today.

Booths of Traditional Medicine Department, Medical Research Department (Lower Myanmar), the booth of Traditional Medicine Research, that of the Ministry of Forestry, the Ministry of Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and traditional medicine producers and medicine raw material dealers were displayed at the exhibition. In addition, the booth at which modern machines for producing traditional medicines was also shown there.

Everybody may visit the exhibition at which 134 booths were being displayed from 9 am to 6 pm daily up to 26 December. Admission is free.

Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia sign cooperation agreement
COLOMBO, 18 Dec — Sri Lanka and Saudi Arabia signed a bilateral cooperation agreement here on Wednesday to further strengthen relations between the two countries, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. The agreement covering the trade and investment, science and technology, culture and sports fields, was signed by Nizar Bine O Madani, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia, who is currently on a visit here, and Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Tryonne Fernando. — MNA/Xinhua

56th Anniversary Independence Day Exhibition
Date — 3rd to 11th January 2004
Time — 9 am to 5 pm
Place — Tatmadaw Hall on U Wisara Road, Yangon.
(Free entrance)
Workshop to Review AIDS Projects held

YANGON, 18 Dec — The opening of the Workshop to Review AIDS Projects, jointly organized by Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association and the UNICEF, was held at the multi-purpose hall of the MMCWA at the corner of Thanthuma and Parami roads in South Okkalapa Township, this morning.

MCCWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe addresses Workshop to Review AIDS Projects. — MNA

The workshop was attended by MMCWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe, Vice-President Dr Daw Tin Lin Myint and CEC members, patrons of the supervisory committee, resident representatives Ms Elke Wish of the UNICEF, officials of Health Department, Yangon Division MMCWA Supervisory Committee and others.

Of the MMCWA and course supervisors from 35 townsships covered in the projects, MMCWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe made an opening speech. Then, Ms Elke Wish also made a speech. After the opening ceremony, the workshop was held. — MNA

First Korean Products Show-2003 opened

YANGON, 18 Dec — The First Products Show of the Republic of Korea organized by the Embassy of the ROK and the Trade and Investment Promotion Agency of the ROK was opened this morning at Yangon Trade Centre in Mingala Taungnyunt Townships.

It was attended by Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Minister for Cooperatives Maj-Gen Htay Oo, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office Maj-Gen Thein Swe, Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun, Ambassador of ROK to Myanmar Mr Lee Kyung Woo, Korean Commercial Attaché Mr Choi Yong Tae and responsible officials.

 Brig-Gen Pyi Sone, Mr Lee Kyung Woo, President of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry U Win Myint, Myanmar-Korea Friendship Association Chairman U Khin Win Shwe and Mr Han Joon Woo of the Trade and Investment Promotion Agency of the ROK formally opened the show. A total of 45 companies participated in the show which will be open till 20 December.

At the fair, electronic goods, communication equipment, machines, medicine, chemicals, food, staff, construction materials, cloth, furniture, household goods were displayed in 60 booths of 45 companies. Lucky draws will be opened at 4 p.m. daily at the show.

Admission is free. — MNA

Sports Ministry marks Founding Anniversary

YANGON, 18 Dec — The Ministry of Sports held the 7th Anniversary of its foundation at the National Indoor Stadium 1 here this morning.

It was attended by Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Aye Myint, Leader of the Leading Panel of Patrons of Myanmar Women Sports Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and members. Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Deputy Minister for Hotels and Tourism Brig-Gen Aye Myint Kyu, officials and others.

On the occasion, the minister delivered an address and presented cash awards and medals for outstanding performance in administrative field (First Class) to Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe and Director-General of the Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htak. medal for outstanding performance in administrative field (Second Class) to SPED Deputy Director-General U Thein Aung, medals for outstanding performance in social field (First Class) to President of Myanmar Wushu Federation U Khin Maung Lay and President of Myanmar Women Sports Federation Professor Dr Daw May May Yee. The minister also presented medals and cash awards to 26 title recipients. Director-General U Thaung Htak presented gifts to the staff of the ministry who won awards in international courses and the courses in central institutes of civil service (Phaukkgyi and Zeebinbiy) and local and international sports events and staff’s children who passed 2002-2003 academic year matriculation examination with flying colours. — MNA

Agreement on cooperation of fish and prawn breeding inked

YANGON, 18 Dec — With the aim of cooperating for the development of fish and prawn breeding sector, the land lease agreement was signed at the meeting hall of the Fisheries Department on Hsinmin Road in Ablon Township this morning.

Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Than and Deputy Minister U Aung Thein were also present at the signing ceremony.

Director-General of the Fisheries Department U Than Tun and Managing Director of the Myanmar Aquamarine Ltd Mr Marc Branthomme signed the land lease agreement and exchanged the documents. Afterwards, Mr Jacques Marcille briefed those present on future plans according to the agreement. — MNA

Motion Picture Production Course concludes

YANGON, 18 Dec — The concluding ceremony of Motion Picture Production Course No (3/2003) conducted by Myanmar Motion Picture Enterprise of the Ministry of Information was held at the feature film section of MMPE this morning, with an address by Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein.

It was attended by directors, general and managing directors of departments and enterprises under the Ministry of Information, the officer on special duty and responsible personnel, directors and deputy directors of MMPE, course instructors and guests.

The deputy minister made a speech and presented prizes to the first, second and third prize winners. Next, the deputy minister presented completion certificates to a representative of the trainees. Managing Director U Bo Kyi of MMPE presented gifts to the course instructors.

A total of 33 trainees attended the six-week course. — MNA
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:
Statistics showing agricultural development in the time of the State Peace and Development Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>1988</th>
<th>2003</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation facilities</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River water pumping projects</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sown acreage of paddy</td>
<td>11.8 million</td>
<td>15.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baskets of paddy yield</td>
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<td>1 billion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sown acreage of beans and pulses</td>
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<td>7.2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sown acreage of edible oil crops</td>
<td>5.03 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sown acreage of cotton</td>
<td>0.44 million</td>
<td>0.8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sown acreage of sugarcane</td>
<td>0.24 million</td>
<td>0.35 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugar production (Metric ton)</td>
<td>28,301</td>
<td>75,474</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The photo shows the supply of water from Zaungtu Reservoir through the spillway. Zaungtu Reservoir was constructed in Bago Township, Bago Division, with the aim of serving the interest of local farmers.

Zaikaye Sluice Gate with 21 valves, each of which measures 6 feet by 12 feet, is of concrete type and was opened on 25 June 2002 near Zaikaye canal in Aungkantha village, Thaton Township, Mon State. It can supply water to 20,000 acres of farmland in the region.

Zaungtu Reservoir was constructed in Bago Township, Bago Division, with the aim of serving the interest of local farmers.

The map showing river water-pumping projects in Mandalay Division.

Reference
completed projects
On-going projects
planned projects

Lawkananda River Water-pumping Project in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Division, can supply water to 11,000 acres of farmland in the region.

The map showing river water-pumping projects being implemented to develop the agricultural sector in Mandalay Division.
China’s “positive, constructive” diplomacy “fruitful” in 2003

Beijing, 18 Dec — China’s diplomatic efforts in 2003 are “positive, constructive” and fruitful”, and China is willing to enhance cooperation with the international community for world peace and security, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said here Tuesday.

Spokesman Liu Jianchao told a press conference that China’s new leadership has adhered to the independent foreign policy of peace, maintaining its continuity and stability.

At the same time, the Chinese Government has progressed with the times and actively explored further development in diplomacy, Liu said.

China continues to develop friendly relations with its neighbours, enhance cooperation with developed countries, and has made new progress in expanding friendship and cooperation with developing countries.

China earnestly fulfils its international obligations and holds international disputes should be properly settled through dialogue and talks. China has played a constructive role in dealing with major issues, strengthening international counter-terrorism cooperation and maintaining world peace and stability.

It is China’s view that peace and development remain the main two major themes of the present era, the spokesman said.

However, non-traditional security issues, such as terrorism, environmental protection, transnational crimes and severe acute respiratory syndromes, have posed new challenges to world peace and development.

China is willing to enhance cooperation with all countries and make its due contribution to safeguarding world peace and stability.

MNA/Xinhua

Australian astronomers discover Milky Way border

Canberra, 18 Dec — Australian astronomers have discovered an extra spiral arm of the Milky Way that they believe wraps around the outskirts of the vast galaxy like a thick gas border.

Astronomers at a scientific research group, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), hope the find will help paint a better picture of the Milky Way galaxy, which is home to Earth.

CSIRO scientist Naomi McClure-Griffiths said the gas border, which is 6,500 light years thick, showed the Milky Way had a structure similar to those of most other galaxies, which have gassy spiral arms extending beyond the more central stellar spiral arms.

Astronomers believe the Milky Way has about four arms made up of hydrogen gas, dust and stars spiralling out from its centre. McClure-Griffiths said the newly discovered gas border is about 60,000 light years from the centre of the Milky Way.

A light year is the distance that light travels in a year, which is about six trillion miles.

“We have known there was gas out there but we haven’t known that there was a structure out there. We thought there was just a smooth drop-off, that the galaxy just sort of slid away,” McClure-Griffiths told Reuters.

“It is at the furthest reaches of the galaxy and is the last thing you see before the galaxy disappears.”

McClure-Griffiths and a small team of scientists were investigating the hydrogen gas in the disc of the Milky Way when they stumbled across the extra arm, which they believe could connect up with one of the galaxy’s central stellar arms.

The finding has been submitted for publication to the Astrophysical Journal of the American Astronomical Society, she added.

MNA/Reuters

Australia eases border controls

Canberra, 18 Dec — Australia’s borders have been eased to allow some exemptions for people coming into the country for business or other purposes.

The government announced last month that the country was no longer considering itself a threat to international borders.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said the changes were to acknowledge the end of the Cold War and the new world order.

MNA/Xinhua

Major highway reopens in Afghanistan

Kabul, 18 Dec — A key highway linking the Afghan capital city with a major southern city reopened on Tuesday, as President Hamid Karzai described the road project as an example of the country’s post-war reconstruction.

“This is not the end, but the beginning of the reconstruction,” said Karzai at the reopening ceremony for the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, which has been renovated with assistance from the United States and Japan.

He told a gathering of senior officials, provincial delegations and diplomats that the rebuilt highway is a road leading the war-ravaged nation to peace, unity and prosperity.

Calling the project’s completion a major achievement of the ongoing reconstruction process, the President said the highway would enhance economic and trade activities for those living in the proximity to the road. With over one-third of the Afghan population living within 50 kilometres of the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, the completion of the road is expected to improve many Afghans’ access to health care, education and job opportunities, officials said.

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MNA/Xinhua
**Capture of Saddam will not automatically lead to security**

**UNITED NATIONS, 18 Dec—** The capture of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein will not automatically lead to dramatic improvement of security in the country, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said here.

In his remarks to the UN Security Council at an open meeting on his latest report on Iraq, the UN chief said events of the past three days “should remind us that we must remain prudent in our assessment. There is no panacea.”

“Iraq is likely to remain a difficult environment,” he told the Council. “We should not expect that the end of the occupation and formation of a provisional Iraqi Government will automatically bring about an end to insecurity, even though we should expect some improvement.”

In his report, Annan said the security environment in Iraq is unlikely to improve in the short to medium term and could deteriorate further.

The world body will remain a “high-value, high-impact” target for terrorist activity in Iraq for the foreseeable future, it said.

“The acting UN Security Co-ordinator assessed the current risk to UN personnel in Iraq as falling in the high to critical category,” Annan said, adding he would recommend a range of protective measures to reduce the risk.

The measures, according to the report, would include a “dedicated, highly mobile, cohesive and responsive” armed force, as well as a preparation and full implementation of enhanced Minimum Operating Safety Standards (MOSSS) to include security plans and procedures and significant office and residential building upgrades.

The UN chief has been put under pressure on the issue of staff safety after his Special Representative in Iraq, Sergio de Mello, along with 21 of his colleagues, were killed on duties when a deadly bombing grounded the UN headquarters in Baghdad on August 19.

Annan has asked former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and veterans of many UN missions to form an Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq to probe the deadly attack.

**Iraqis see no end to fuel crisis despite US efforts**

**BAGHDAD, 15 Dec—** Iraq remained in the grip of an energy crisis on Tuesday, despite the deployment of US forces to try and wipe out a black market in oil products and amid warnings of social unrest if shortages continue.

“The fundamental problem has not been solved,” a senior oil official said. “Sabotage and national power system breakdowns are disrupting supply. The spread of home generators is also producing a demand for fuel.”

Abdelaziz al-Hakim, a member of the US-appointed government, said around a dozen sabotage attacks targeted last month the northern pipeline network, which supplies the main refinery of Baiji and the Dora plant on the edge of Baghdad with crude oil and carries oil products such as gasoline.

The sabotage, power cuts and unsafe roads have interrupted deliveries of gasoline, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), the main cooking fuel.

Gasoline sells at the pump for less than one cent a litre, but queues stretch for miles and it still takes up to a day to fill up. Pumping station operators say supply fell over the past week, driving gasoline on the black market to more than double to 25 cents a litre.

“It’s a real disaster,” a taxi driver said. “A neighbour of ours waited 15 hours to fill up only to find the gasoline stolen from his car and he parked it overnight.”

US forces were deployed last week around pumping stations to prevent customers from filling up more than their car tanks and selling it on the side of the road.

**Canadian PM concerned with efforts to bid for Iraqi contracts**

**OTTAWA, 18 Dec—** Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin has said it remains to be seen if Canada will be able to bid for contracts for the reconstruction of Iraq, local Press reported Tuesday.

Martin said President George W Bush made it very clear Canada is already a major participant in the reconstruction of Iraq, working on the rebuilding of the judicial system and the training of police, and is carrying what he called a “very heavy load” in Afghanistan.

Last week, Martin’s predecessor, Jean Chretien, said he had told the US president not to worry about Canada remaining on the list of countries excluded from contracts—a claim quickly shot down by the White House.

But Martin, who took office Friday, acknowledged it is still not clear whether Canada will be able to bid on contracts, or will be limited to sub-contracts.

**Three US soldiers wounded in Iraq roadside bomb**

**Tikrit (Iraq), 18 Dec—** Three US soldiers were wounded on Tuesday when a roadside bomb hit a military patrol in Tikrit, hometown of captured former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, US officials said.

They said an improvised explosive device detonated near the soldiers’ vehicle which was on patrol in the town, 170 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad.

A Reuters reporter saw two soldiers being brought into a US military base. The injuries of the three were described as not life-threatening.

Saddam was captured on Saturday at an underground hideout 15 km (nine miles) south of Tikrit.

Iraqi insurgents have killed 198 US soldiers since major combat was declared over on May 1. MNA/Reuters

**Boeing gives go-ahead for “7E7”**

**WASHINGTON, 18 Dec—** Boeing Company announced Tuesday that its board of directors has given the go-ahead to begin offering for sale the new 7E7 passenger airplane, which is also nicknamed “Dreamliner”.

“The board’s decision validates the 7E7’s compelling business case and the tremendous customer interest in this airplane,” Boeing president and Chief Executive Officer Harry Stonecipher told more than 3,000 7E7 team members gathered at Seattle’s Washington State Convention and Trade Centre.

“The 7E7 is a game changer and we’re anxious to begin offering it to our airline customers,” Stonecipher said.

MNA/Reuters

**Soldiers of the US Army’s 4th Infantry Division guard detained Iraqi men during a night raid in the town of Baqubah in central Iraq on 17 Dec, 2003.** — MNA/Reuters

**US soldiers look at an Iraqi man shouting anti-American slogans during a rally supporting arrested former Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein in Mosul on 17 Dec, 2003.** — MNA/Reuters

**Iraq’s export pipeline still subject to attack**

**BAGHDAD, 18 Dec—** Iraq’s northern oil export pipeline was attacked on the day the US announced the capture of Saddam Hussein and remains too vulnerable to reopen, the head of the North Oil Company said yesterday.

Adel Kazzaz told Reuters the pipeline was attacked on Sunday and a lack of security was preventing the resumption of operations along the line that runs from the Kirkuk oilfields to the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

“It was subject to an attack only three days ago. Security measures remain insufficient to start the pipeline,” Kazzaz said by telephone from Kirkuk.

“We have not seen a change in the threat after the capture of Saddam Hussein.”

Senior Iraqi officials had hoped that the capture of Saddam would demoralize resistance and boost security along the pipeline, allowing the country to raise exports above the current 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd), all of which pass through the southern Basra oil terminal.

The pipeline carried 800,000 bpd before the US invasion of Iraq in March, when Iraq had export capacity of 2.5 million bpd.

The United States has contracted Erinys International, a South African-based company, to provide security for Iraqi oil infrastructure, including refineries and the export pipeline.

The company has been hiring hundreds of Iraqi guards, equipping them with assault rifles and paying them an average of 150 US dollars a month for 12-hour shifts.

Kazzaz said Erinys had not taken enough measures to protect the pipeline. Erinys officials were not available for comment. — MNA/Reuters

**THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR**

_Special report on Iraq, the UN chief said events of the past three days “should remind us that we must remain prudent in our assessment. There is no panacea.”_
Inter saved by freak goal in Italian Cup

**ROMA, 18 Dec—** A freak own goal by Reggiana keeper Emanuele Belardi sent Inter Milan through to the quarterfinals of the Italian Cup on Wednesday.

In the second minute of stoppage time, with the score 1-0 to Reggiana, Inter looked to be heading out of the competition on the away-goals rule.

But Argentine striker Julio Cruz’ long-range drive struck the post, bounced off Belardi’s head and rolled into the net to give the visitors an unlikely 1-1 draw on the night and a 3-2 aggregate win.

Reggina midfielder Julio Leon put his team ahead in the 38th minute when he nodded in Gianluca Falsini’s cross at the far post.

The home side were then reduced to 10 men after defender Simone Giacchetta committed a second bookable offence, but Inter failed to take advantage of their numerical superiority.

The visitors were well-defended well and nearly made it 2-0 shortly after the interval when striker David Di Michele headed narrowly over the bar, before Inter’s late goal provided an agonising finale to the home side’s evening.

Inter’s quarterfinal opponents will be the winner of Thursday’s fixture between AC Milan and Sampdoria, which European champions Milan lead 1-0 after the first leg.

Villa stun Chelsea to join Boro in Cup semis

**VIENNA, 18 Dec—** Aston Villa stunned champions Chelsea on Tuesday night to secure their first German Cup semi-final.

Villa, who were top and undefeated until they lost 1-0 to champions Bayern Munich on Saturday, failed to bounce back in their last game before the winter break.

The southerners remain four points behind leaders Werder Bremen, who beat Hansa Rostock 3-0 on Tuesday to secure top spot at the halfway stage.

Bayern, who crashed SC Freiburg 6-0 on Tuesday, and Leverkusen are second and third respectively like Stuttgart who have 35 points.

The battle for the title, which will resume on January 31, is likely to become a race between the top four sides with fifth-placed VfL Bochum now 13 points off top spot after failing for a 2-2 draw at Hannover 96 on Wednesday.

Stuttgart, who face Chelsea in the first knockout stage of the Champions League, disappointed their fans with a dismal show before the break and trailed 2-0 at halftime after goals from midfielder Carsten Ramelow and striker Dimitar Berbatov.

The home side woke up after the interval and German striker Kevin Kuranyi pulled one back 11 minutes into the second half but Berbatov was untroubled after 62 minutes with a superb effort from the edge of the box to make it 3-1.

Midfielder and captain Zvonimir Soldo restored Stuttgart’s hopes in an entertaining game by scoring from close range in the 68th minute. Stuttgart kept pushing but Leverkusen held on.

Stuttgart, whose defence made uncharacteristic errors on Wednesday, have conceded more goals in their last two games than they had in the previous 15. Leverkusen, the 2002 Champions League finalists, narrowly escaped relegation last season but have recovered and remain in contention for their first German title. — MNA/Reuters

Soccer

**ITALY, 18 Dec—** Second Division Levante beat King’s Cup holders Mallorca 2-0 to produce the biggest upset of the second round on Wednesday.

David Aganzo scored both goals for promotion-chasing Levante, turning in a cross from Felix Eittem after 14 minutes and adding a second 12 minutes from time after beating Javier Olaizola and slipping a shot past keeper Miki.

Racing Santander followed Mallorca out of the competition. They went down 3-2 on penalties at Second Division Eibar after the match had finished goalless over 120 minutes, but there were no further shocks in Wednesday action.

Barcelona reached the last 16 with a convincing 4-0 win away to Ciudad de Murcia, Valencia eased to a 2-0 win at home to fellow First Division side Murcia and Murcia, Valencia eased to a 2-0 win at home to Ciudad de Murcia and Murcia, Valencia.

The Dutch winger scored an outstanding solo goal to make it 2-0 on 74 minutes and produced another precise shot for the third four minutes from time.

With a minute left on the clock, Ronaldo won and converted a penalty to put a satisfying gloss on the scoreline.

The defeats for Mallorca, Racing Santander and Murcia brought the total of First Division casualties in the second round to five, following defeats for Real Sociedad and Espanyol among four games played on Tuesday.

Osasuna were set to become the sixth side from close range in the 68th minute. Stuttgart kept pushing but Leverkusen held on.

Stuttgart, whose defence made uncharacteristic errors on Wednesday, have conceded more goals in their last two games than they had in the previous 15.

Leverkusen, the 2002 Champions League finalists, narrowly escaped relegation last season but have recovered and remain in contention for their first German title. — MNA/Reuters

Villa stunned by AC Milan in Cup semis

**VIENNA, 18 Dec—** Aston Villa pulled off a shock 2-1 victory over big-spending Chelsea on Wednesday to reach the semifinals of the League Cup.

Villa will play Bolton Wanderers for a place in the final on February 29 in Cardiff, while Middlesbrough, who beat Tottenham Hotspur 5-4 on penalties in Wednesday’s other quarterfinal, will play Arsenal.

A fantastic goal by Colombian striker Juan Pablo Angel gave Villa a 106th-minute lead, Chelsea’s English playmaker Joe Cole levelled in the 69th minute but Gavin McCann lashed home the winner nine minutes later after an Angel shot had been blocked.

The result was a huge upset, with Villa lying just a point above the relegation zone and third-placed Chelsea challenging for Premier League and Champions League honours. Chelsea’s squad has been assembled at a cost of 111 million pounds (194.7 million US dollars) since the July takeover by Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich and between the starting XI and the substitutes, coach Claudio Ranieri fielded virtually all his best players at Villa Park. — MNA/Reuters

King’s Cup holders Mallorca fall to Levante

**MADRID, 18 Dec—** Second Division Levante beat King’s Cup holders Real Mallorca 2-0 to produce the biggest upset of the second round on Wednesday.

Following the introduction of substitute Marc Overmars in the second half.

The Dutch winger scored an outstanding solo goal to make it 2-0 on 74 minutes and produced another precise shot for the third four minutes from time.

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Leverkusen, the 2002 Champions League finalists, narrowly escaped relegation last season but have recovered and remain in contention for their first German title. — MNA/Reuters

Perugia cruise into Italian Cup quarterfinals

**ROME, 18 Dec—** Perugia reached the quarterfinals of the Italian Cup on Tuesday with a comfortable 3-0 win in the second leg of their tie against Chievo Verona.

The Umbrian club — who trailed 2-1 after the away leg and who are yet to win a match in Serie A this season — took the lead two minutes before the interval when midfielders Chris Obodo headed powerfully in from a corner.

In the 61st-minute defender Souleymane Diamoutene hooked in the rebound after Chievo keeper Giorgio Fossi saved Zisis Vryzas’ cross-range shot.

Ex-Coventry City striker Jay Bothroyd completed the victory six minutes later, firing low past Fossi. — MNA/Reuters
New finds in Pondaung region further strengthens theory — anthropoid primates originated in Asia

Jaws, teeth, tasks and bones of primitive elephants found by Myanmar-Japan team. (News reported) — MNA

AGRI & LIVESTOCK BREEDING WORKS
INSPECTED: Yangon City Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, accompanied by Head of Information Division of YCDC U Hla Myint See and Head of Production Department U Tin Pe, inspected the agricultural and livestock breeding works at wetlands of Kuakhtalat region, Twantay Township, on 18-12-2003. The Mayor seen inspecting the fish breeding work — vde

WEATHER
Thursday, 18 December, 2003
Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours
MST: During the past 24 hours, light rain has been isolated in Chin State, Sagaing and Mandalay Divisions. Weather has been partly cloudy in Rakhine State and Magway Division and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below normal in Kayin State and Tanintharyi Division, (5°C) below normal in Mon State, Yangon Division, (6°C) to (7°C) below normal in Bago and Ayeyawady Divisions, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Kachin, Shan States and upper Sagaing Division, (6°C) above normal in Rakhine State, Mandalay and Magway Divisions, (7°C) above normal in Chin State and lower Sagaing Division and about normal in the remaining areas.

Maximum temperature on 17-12-2003 was 32.0°C (90°F). Minimum temperature on 18-12-2003 was 13.0°C (55°F). Relative humidity at 9:30 hrs MST on 18-12-2003 was 74%. Total sunshine hours on 17-12-2003 was (8.7) hours approx. Rainfall on 18-12-2003 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2003 was 2211 mm (87.05 inches) at Yangon Airport, 2315 mm (91.14 inches) at Kaba-Aye and 2394 mm (94.25 inches) at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 11 mph from East at (13:10) hours MST on 17-12-2003. Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 19-12-2003:Except for possibility of isolated rain in Tanintharyi Division, weather will be generally fair in the whole country. De-
Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives environmental ministers of ASEAN countries at Zeyathiri Beikman.— MNA.

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Environmental Ministers of ASEAN countries

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets Professor Robert H Taylor (Former Pro-Director, SOAS, and Retired Vice-Chancellor, Buckingham University of UK).— MNA.

Delegates to ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting arrive

Conference of ASEAN+3 Environment Ministers Meeting this morning. Similarly, a delegate to the meeting, Environmental Deputy Minister of Japan Dr Shuichi Katoh, also arrived here this evening. They were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and embassies concerned in Yangon. — MNA

Four political objectives
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquillity, prevalence of law and order
- National reconsolidation
- Emergence of a new enduring State Constitution
- Building of a new modern developed nation in accord with the new State Constitution

Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives British professor

YANGON, 18 Dec—Prime Minister of the Union of Myanmar General Khin Nyunt received Professor Robert H Taylor (Former Pro-Director, SOAS, and Retired Vice-Chancellor, Buckingham University of UK) at Zeyathiri Beikman at 4 pm today. Also present at the call were Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win and Director-General Thura U Aung Htet of the Protocol Department.— MNA

Four economic objectives
- Development of agriculture as the base and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
- Proper evolution of the market-oriented economic system
- Development of the economy inviting participation in terms of technical know-how and investments from sources inside the country and abroad
- The initiative to shape the national economy must be kept in the hands of the State and the national peoples

Four social objectives
- Uplift of the morale and morality of the entire nation
- Uplift of national prestige and integrity and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national character
- Uplift of dynamism of patriotic spirit
- Uplift of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Myanmar-China agreements signed

YANGON, 18 Dec—Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs U Khin Maung Win and Assistant Minister of Commerce Mr Chen Jian of the People’s Republic of China signed the agreement on economic and technical cooperation together with the agreement on provision of a loan at low interest rate at the meeting hall of the Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development at 9.30 am yesterday. Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Finance and Revenue Col Hla Thein Swe, Deputy Minister for Rail Transport Thura U Thaung Tun, Deputy Attorney-General Dr Tun Shin, Chinese Ambas-ador Mr Li Jinjun, departmental officials and staff of the Chinese Embassy.

INSIDE
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Let’s actively take part in regional and national development tasks

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