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

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

### Forces of national construction and national defence are to be mobilized and strengthened

Only when a region’s economy develops, can the per capita income be increased and the standard of living of the people be improved. As economic development is related with improvement in the education and health sectors, human resource development has to be brought about. Hence, the forces of national construction and national defence are to be mobilized and strengthened through harmonious combination of economic and human resource development.

At present, the Government is paying serious attention to development of rural areas, border areas and 24 special development zones with a view to ensuring harmonious development of all the regions in the Union.

Responsible personnel of respective regions are to see to it that all the children of school-age go to school and continue their high school, university and vocational education. Moreover, they are to nurture the youth to become intellectuals and intelligentsia on whom the country can rely. In addition, they will have to promote the health sector so that the youth can become healthy citizens.

Senior General Than Shwe,
Chairman of State Peace and Development Council
Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services
(From guidance given during his tour of Mandalay
Division on 19-1-2003)

### Education Minister attends golden jubilee ceremony of Pyinmana BEHS No 1

**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Thai ambassador Thai ambassador**

Khin Maung Win and Director-General of the Protocol Department Thura U Aung Htet. — MNA

**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt greets Thai Ambassador Mr Oum Maolanon at Zeyathiri Beikman. — MNA**

**Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt receives Thai Ambassador Mr Oum Maolanon at Zeyathiri Beikman. — MNA.**

**Education Minister attends golden jubilee ceremony of Pyinmana BEHS No 1**

YANGON, 24 Dec — Minister for Education U Than Aung, together with Col Win Kyaw Sein (Retd) and Headmistress Daw Win Kyi formally opened the archway bearing the golden jubilee ceremony. Minister U Than Aung opened the library to mark the golden jubilee. Next, Headmistress Daw Win Kyi unveiled the plaque. Later, the minister and guests visited the multimedia classrooms at Thiri Hall and the golden jubilee exhibition. Afterwards, CSSTB member U Hla Myint Oo (Yangon) unveiled signboard of the golden jubilee square. Chairman of Pyinmana Township Peace and Development Council U Myint Lwin unveiled the plaque. Later, the minister and guests visited the multimedia classrooms at Thiri Hall and the golden jubilee exhibition.

(See page 8)

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

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* Tapo ca, ascetic practices; this is the way to auspiciousness.

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* Building of a new modern developed nation
* Emergence of a new enduring State
* National reconsolidation
* Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, prevalence of law and order
* 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
* 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
For flourishing of Myanmar traditional medical science

In building the Union of Myanmar to be a peaceful, modern and developed one, it is necessary for all the healthy citizens to take part in the nation-building endeavours. Therefore, the State has laid down the health objective—for the entire national people to be in good healthy and fitness and be able to live with high life expectancy—and is implementing it.

To realize the objective, effective measures are taken through the three tasks—education, medical care and treatment. Among them, paying attention to human resource development and health and fitness of the entire people, physicians and health staff, on their part, are to provide effective health care services to the public through their experience and skills.

Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Than Shwe, on 21 December, inspected construction of the Traditional Medicine University and Mandalay General Hospital in Mandalay.

In his guidance given to officials on traditional medicine, the Head of State said that traditional medicine practitioners are to introduce new medicines and therapies in keeping with the advancing world without sticking to old thoughts. He spoke of the need to make efforts for uplift of the role of Myanmar traditional medicine in combination with modern sciences and traditional medical science of other nations.

The role of Myanmar traditional medicine is important in providing better health care services to the people and thus the State is giving encouragement to systematic progress in the sector of traditional medicine.

Researches on effective and potent traditional medicines are put on record and encouragement is being given to producing traditional medicines that can cure common diseases in the country. In addition, therapies are introduced to cure some diseases that cannot be cured by western medicines.

Diploma courses for traditional medical science and traditional medicine practitioners courses are being opened for flourishing of traditional medical science. Moreover, a traditional medicine university has already been established to confer degree on Myanmar traditional medical science.

Courses conducted at the university must be of high standard and they can also be recognized and accepted by other nations. Teachers in the university are to strive for development of traditional medical science.

Myanmar traditional medicine practitioners and officials concerned are urged to prepare and introduce new items of traditional medicines and therapies for flourishing of Myanmar traditional medical science.

Objectives of the 56th Anniversary of Independence Day

— All the national people to collectively safeguard the national independence and ensure perpetuation of sovereignty
— All the national people to be united to ensure non-discrimination of national solidarity
— All the national people to strive for the emergence of enduring State Constitution and for the building of a new, modern and developed nation.
— All the national people to participate with full sense of Union Spirit and Patriotism in the successful implementation of the seven-point roadmap of the State.

Christmas

A Victorious Day

It may seem odd to call the birthday of Jesus ‘a victorious day’ when he was born away from his town, without a place for him in the inn, laid in a manger after birth, persecuted and exiled after a few days. In late life Jesus would not have a place to lay his head on. Jesus was a teacher not a conqueror. He was a servant, not the master (Mk 10:45). His only gesture of victory was a parody of imperial claims. He entered Jerusalem riding a donkey! This is precisely in the context of his last week that John puts into his lips the only claim to victory: “Take courage; I have conquered the world” he says at conclusion of his last sermon (Jn 16:33), and this is precisely the reason why it is right to call his birthday a Victorious Day: it is his victory over the spirit of the world, the spirit of domination, of racial superiority, of power for its own sake.

Victory over all Forms of Social Barriers

Myanmar is a country of festivals which bring families and people together. As we celebrate Christmas, we local Christians need to reflect on what the celebration means for our life as Church, for our neighbours and for our togetherness with them in the country. Christmas is a feast for shepherds and magi, for Jews and Gentiles, for Simeons and Annas, for village and city, for Joseph and Mary. Christmas is a victory over all forms of social barriers between all nations and peoples.

Victory over Fear

Every time we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we receive mandate to make peace, the gift of the Messiah, which no power or domination can take away or destroy. Singing the harmony of people is the act of faith. Faith in Christ makes us peacemakers. Peacemaking is the joy of Christian discipleship (Mt. 5:9). Jesus the giver of peace is God’s gesture of fear not, the Christmas greeting thrice conveyed through Gabriel: ‘Don’t be afraid’ (Lk 1:33, 2:10). This is the good news of salvation for all peoples, for all cultures, for all the excluded. Jesus is the peace sign of God. He is God’s solidarity with all, particularly the oppressed. The mystery of God-with-us, Emmanuel, is glimpsed within the longing for relationship and solidarity in the heart of every person and in the depth of our common humanity.

Victory over Marginalization

The good news of the birth of the Savior is an invitation to the fullness of life. To be with God-with-us we must be with one-another. We come to know God in God-with-us, Emmanuel, is glimpsed within the longing for relationship and solidarity in the heart of every person and in the depth of our common humanity.

School Family Day

The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago.
The second best time is now.
Iraqi judge assassinated in Mosul

BAGHDAD, 24 Dec—Gunmen in a speeding car assassinated a leading Iraqi judge in the northern city of Mosul Tuesday before successfully eluding capture. Eyewitnesses told United Press International the gunmen fired numerous rounds at Yussef Khoshshid Ghaeb as he was parking his car near a Mosul mosque.

The car was travelling at high speed, preventing a police chase. A fellow countryman of Ghaeb said he did not know his father had personal enemies, noting the assassination occurred within hours after his father was promoted to chief of the criminal court in Mosul.

Mural ruled out involvement of remnants of the Baath regime in the slaying because his father had no links with the Baath party, adding, he was totally independent from all parties and political groups.

Iraqs working with the United States-led coalition, including judges and police officers, have been targets of similar assassination attempts.

United Nations, 24 Dec—The United States and United Nations were in a game of cat-and-mouse over UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s call for talks next month on the UN’s future role in postwar Iraq.

Annan’s spokesman said there was still no word on whether the United States would take part while Washington insisted it had never received any invitation for the talks. The UN chief said last week he wanted to meet with the US-led coalition in Iraq and the US-appointed Iraqi Governing Council to see how the United Nations fits into plans for Iraq’s transition to self rule, due to happen in July.

He suggested a January 15 date and demanded “clarity” about the UN role. Annan pulled his international staff out of Baghdad in October over security fears after a suicide bombing killed 22 people at the UN’s Baghdad offices.

Annan spokesman Fred Eckhard said Tuesday that the Governing Council was waiting to see if the meeting for a few days, with other UN sources saying the new date would be January 19. But there was no word from Washington, he said.

“We have no acceptance yet on the part of the Coali- tion Provisional Authority” in Iraq, he said. Eckhard said Annan’s request was “not insisting” that it be a trilateral meeting. As long as he could speak with both parties, he’d be happy.

But a US official at the United Nations told AFP: “We still haven’t seen any invitation.”

Annan wants better security and a clear definition of the UN’s responsibilities before sending staff back to Iraq. Washington says it favours a “vital” UN role but remains wary of the world body.

In proposing the meeting on Thursday, Annan noted the agreement between Iraqi leaders and the US coalition on the handover of power in Baghdad at the end of June made no mention of the United Nations.

The United States and United Nations were in a game of cat-and-mouse over UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s call for talks next month on the UN’s future role in postwar Iraq—[internet]

No agreement yet between UN, US on Iraq talks

Terrorism.

India emerging as favourite medical destination

NEW DELHI, 24 Dec—India may not rank high up on healthcare front in the world, but the country is fast emerging as one of the most sought after medical destinations in Asia with thousands of offshore patients arriving here every year.

Thanks to this trend, terms such as medical tourism, healthcare outsourcing and medical back office support are now gaining ground in the country.

“In last few years, India has emerged as a favourite destination for people from across the globe. This can be easily proved if we look at the number of foreign patients we have received. In last five years, our hospital has received about 60,000 off-shore patients from 55 countries,” says Dr. Anupam Sibal, Director Medical Services, Apollo Hospital here.

The treatment in great demand includes neuro and cardiac ailments, cancer, pediatric care and joint replacement surgery. Tourists also visit India for alternative treatments like Ayurveda and Yoga.

Experts say the main reason behind the sudden rush in getting treated in a “third world country” is the availability of vast medical talent here.

“The main reason behind India emerging as a favourite destination for healthcare is that medical expertise available here is second to none. There are over 35,000 doctors of Indian origin in United States alone,” says Dr. Naresh Trehan, Executive Director, Escorts Heart Institute here.

Traffic accident figures drop in Vietnam

HANOI, 24 Dec—The number of traffic accidents, fatalities and injuries in Vietnam between January and late December, respectively, decreased 25.9 per cent, 10.8 per cent and 33.2 per cent against last year.

Localities nationwide reported 20,734 traffic accidents which claimed 11,764 lives and injured 20,701 people, according to the National Committee for Traffic Safety on Tuesday. The figures drop for the first time over the past years, mainly thanks to police’s tightened management and inspection over vehicles and their owners, the committee said.

Vietnam to build int’l airport at ex-US base

HANOI, 24 Dec—Communist Vietnam plans to turn a former American military base in central Vietnam into an international airport in hopes of boosting tourism to its white-sand beaches, officials said here.

They said work was underway to add passenger reception facilities to the airstrip at what was once the US naval and air base at Cam Ranh Bay in the province of Khanh Hoa.

The new airport will be a hub to bring foreign tourists to all central regions as early as April 2004, “a spokesman for the Khanh Hoa People’s Committee told Reuters.

US-built facilities include two 4,000-metre runways that could receive large aircraft including Boeing 747-400s, the official said. Cam Ranh naval base has one of Asia’s finest deep-water anchorages offering strategic access to the South China Sea.

Greenpeace urges Philippine govt to prioritize environment issue

MANILA, 24 Dec—Environmental advocacy group Greenpeace International Philippines urged government officials to put environmental issues at the top of their agenda following the landslides in central and southern Philippines.

“They always say that environmental issues are not vital, but we can all see what environment disasters could do. It is time that they make these the main issues,” the Philippine Daily Inquirer on-line news Tuesday quoted Greenpeace Asia’s lead campaigner Von Hernandez as saying on Monday. Hernandez said environmental issues reach the forefront only when tragedies occur and Congress has passed no important environmental protection measures. As a result, demolished areas have increased over the last five years. He noted that only 13.5 per cent of the country’s estimated forest cover remained, as against the 56 per cent required to maintain ecological stability. “We easily forget what happened in Ormoc City, Leyte (in the central Philippines), in 1991 and measures to prevent such tragedies have not been put in place,” Hernandez said. —[internet]
Annan saddened by deadly landslides in Philippines

UNITED NATIONS, 24 Dec— United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan voiced Monday distress at deadly landslides and floods in the central part of the Philippines, a UN spokesman said in a statement. The UN chief conveyed condolences and deepest sympathy to the Philippine Government and to the victims of the disaster, the spokesman said, adding that the United Nations stands ready to assist those affected by the tragedy.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is providing an emergency grant of $50,000 US dollars to help relief efforts and will work to mobilize international donor response, he said. MNA/Xinhua

Indochina to strengthen anti-narcotics cooperation

HANOI, 24 Dec— Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam plan to conduct a joint project on fighting against drug trafficking via their borders.

According to a two-day trilateral ministerial meeting which concluded here Tuesday, the countries will establish taskforces and joint liaison offices in Vietnam’s Tay Ninh Province and Cambodia’s Svay Rieng, and Vietnam’s Ha Tinh and Laos’ Bolikhamsai.

They also agreed to set up exchanges of delegations and information about drug-related crimes, criminals and ways of dealing with them.

Indochina’s relevant agencies, especially law-enforcement ones, and border authorities should meet on a regular basis, the meeting’s delegates stressed.

Via cooperation agreements and action-coordinating plans, functional agencies of the three countries have frequently exchanged information relating to drug prevention and fight as well as measures to reduce drug crimes along their borders,” said Truong Huu Quoc, chief of Vietnam’s General Directorate of Police under the Ministry of Public Security.

According to the ministry, they have so far this year detected 2,718 drug cases involving 3,863 people along Vietnam-Laos and Vietnam-Cambodia borders. Vietnam now has more than 169,000 drug addicts, 22,000 people more than last year. Drug addicts in 13 northern mountainous provinces account for 30.5 per cent of the country’s total. MNA/Xinhua

HK takes moves to protect elderly from infectious diseases

HONG KONG, 24 Dec— The Hong Kong Department of Health announced Monday the precautions against infectious diseases in residential care homes for elderly, including appointing infectious control officers (ICOs) and reinforcing guidelines.

Health Department Medical and Health Officer Wong Wai Ying said at a Press briefing that the department had already visited and assessed the hygiene conditions of all elderly residential care homes before the end of October, and the results showed most of the care homes were under satisfying hygienic conditions.

The Health Department has renewed the guidelines of preventing the outbreak of infectious diseases in accordance with the assessment result and distributed them to the care homes.

Departments concerned have also appointed each elderly residential care home an ICO responsible for handling all affairs related to infectious precautions and control.

Wong Wai Ying said that a number of seminars and workshops for ICOS had been held by the Health Department from September to November to reinforce the knowledge of handling and preventing infectious diseases.

The department also sent out a team on Monday to visit and give on-the-spot guidance to the staff of elderly residential care homes.—MNA/Xinhua

IAEA to start nuclear inspections in Libya soon

VIENNA, 24 Dec— Mohamed ElBaradei, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said here that he will visit Libya next week and inspections of suspected nuclear sites in the country may start soon.

"I’ll be going to Libya some time next week with a team of senior experts," ElBaradei told a news conference. He said he would report Libya’s undisclosed nuclear activities, including a uranium enrichment programme, to the IAEA’s governing board on Monday.

"Libyan officials confirmed that Libya will sign an additional protocol to the NPT (Non-Proliferation Treaty)," he said.

With Tripoli’s pledge to sign the additional protocol, IAEA inspectors may take surprise inspections at suspected sites as early as next week, said the head of the UN nuclear watchdog.

Libyan Prime Minister Shukri Moham- med Ghanim told the BBC radio Monday that his country is ready to sign a protocol on snap inspections of its nuclear facilities.

Ghanim replied with “yes” when asked in a telephone interview from Tripoli on whether his country was ready to sign the additional protocol to the NPT, which allows snap inspections of nuclear facilities by the UN nuclear watchdog. “We are members of the world community. We are agreed to the commitment we are taking in front of the International Atomic Energy Agency,” said the Prime Minister.

Libya announced Friday in a statement that it will scrap all its chemical and weapons of mass destruction, adding that it would also quit programmes for developing chemical and nuclear weapons and long-range missiles. — MNA/Xinhua

Occupation forces bomb Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 24 Dec— Some 15 explosions have shaken the Iraqi capital as witnesses said that US Apache helicopters pounded the al-Dura area after an American convoy came under attack.

Occupation troops carrying out patrols first became aware of the attack late on Tuesday night in al-Dura, southwest Baghdad, witnesses told our correspondent. Helicopters then attacked the area. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

A US military spokeswoman said: “We cannot comment on ongoing military operations. However, this is linked to Operation Iron Justice that involves explosion and aerial attack.”

Operation Iron Justice, launched 1 December, is aimed at curbing corruption and stemming the alleged flow of money to anti-occupation fighters, and reducing criminal activity.

Kidnappings, carjackings and other violence has swept the country following the US-British March invasion and occupation.

Ambulances could be heard rushing to the scene in the early hours of Wednesday, reported our correspondent. US warplanes hovered over the capital.

It was the most intense military activity in the capital for weeks.

Earlier, in the al-Amal neighbourhood, western Baghdad, a US tank speeding on the wrong side of the road crashed into a civilian car, leaving two Iraqi passengers dead and another two injured, said our correspondent.

Meanwhile, occupation forces continue to carry out sweeps across the country, detaining alleged resistance fighters.

In Kirkuk, troops arrested 16 residents of two Arab neighbourhoods.

Internet

Iraqi guerillas take pride in pounding US troops

BAGHD (Iraq), 24 Dec— The burlly young Iraqis swell with pride when he talks about the men he leads in mortar attacks against a US airbase under the cover of darkness.

“After dusk we begin our attacks with 82 or 120mm mortars,” said the former special officer in Saddam Hussein’s security apparatus who goes by the nom de guerre of Abu Jassem.

In the heart of the “Sunni Triangle”, Saddam’s capture last week by the Americans has done little to dampen the will to fight among fellow Sunni Muslims, angered by foreign occupation and at losing their once dominant minority position in society.

Abu Jassem said his lives in one of a string of lush palm-lined villages close to the former Iraqi Airforce base, now occupied by US troops and near the town of Baquba.

“We hit (that) with nine mortars,” he said, pointing to a communications tower on the outskirts of Baquba, some 40 miles north of Baghdad.

The sprinkle of small villages east of Baguha became moderately well off under Saddam’s regime, which contin- ued an Iraqi tradition of repressing the Shiite Muslim majority. Many of the 3,000 residents were members of Iraq’s military, security and industrial complexes and bitterly resent the US troops.

Abu Jassem said Saddam’s capture last week by US forces near the former President home town of Tikrit, further to the north of Baquba, jolted many of his followers but has not broken their spirit or determination to hurt the American occupiers.

The resistance will strengthen, not for love of Saddam, but for love of the people,” Abu Jassem said.

As if to underline his determination, a cache of shiny new mortar bombs lay in hiding spots just visible behind the palms on the road facing the base.

MNA/Xinhua

An Iraqi worker carries an empty Sam 7 missile head, in Fallujah, northeastern Iraq, on 22 December, 2003.—I

South Korean protesters shout slogans during a rally in Seoul on 23 December, 2003. —I

INTERNET
IRAQ UNDER US OCCUPATION

A US army soldier walks amid Iraqi civilians as he patrols the area of a gas station in Baghdad recently. — INTERNET

US Army soldiers during a night patrol in Iraq recently. A barrage of explosions interspersed with loud automatic fire echoed across Baghdad as an airplane circled overhead in what the military said could be part of an ongoing operation. — INTERNET

A US armoured vehicle secures the area of a gas station in Baghdad on 23 Dec, 2003. — INTERNET

US soldiers inspect a minibus damaged in a blast after a roadside explosive device went off killing two and wounding two people in central Baghdad, on Wednesday, 24 Dec, 2003. — INTERNET

Photo shows US soldiers during an operation east of Baquba on 20 December. — INTERNET

US soldiers of 1st Battalion, 22nd Regiment, (1-22) of the 4th Infantry Division patrol as the sun sets in Tikrit, Iraq, on 22 December, 2003. — INTERNET
The takeover of State Power by the Tatmadaw on 2 March 1962 was not only a change in the course of the history of the country but also a bold and decisive move to shoulder the national duty of preventing the Union from disintegration and safeguarding the independence and sovereignty.

After forming the Revolutionary Council, the Tatmadaw set forth the Myanmar Socialist Programme on 30 April 1962, announcing that the country would follow the programme. It was on 4 July 1962 that the Myanmar Socialist Programme Party came into existence as a political party. Owing to ongoing situations, the Party had to endeavour to restore the national solidarity as there were different political parties, ideologies and classes.

The Revolutionary Council met with leaders of major political parties like the Pa-htha-sa, the AFPFL and the Pa-ma-nya-ta three times — the first on 4 March 1962, the second on 7 May and the third on 17 May, and planned to them the attitude of the Tatmadaw.

On 11 June 1963, the Revolutionary Council invited armed insurgent groups to peace talks for restoration of internal peace. The White Flag Communist Party (BCP) and the Red Flag Communist Party and other six insurgent groups, totalling eight armed groups, came and discussed with the Tatmadaw. From 2 March 1962 to the close of 1962, many a military operation was launched by the Tatmadaw to quell the BCP, the Ma-da-nya-ta, the KMT and other insurgent groups. For the same reason, the military operations continued, claiming more than 1,760 lives of insurgent groups in 1964 and more than 900 in 1965 and arresting 350. A total of 2,466 insurgents surrendered.

Apart from those military operations, the Tatmadaw also launched major military operations irrespective of military commands during the period from 1964 to 1968. Shwe Linyon, Moe Hein and Shwe Lawin military operations launched under the command of the South-West Command, and with the cooperation of the local people, were able to crush the insurgents including the BCP and the Ma-da-nya-ta in the delta region. The Tatmadaw launched the Pyithaya Military Operation and seized the BCP high command in Lekhant region on 17 July. The BCP had to move its headquarters from place to place due to the Tatmadaw’s operations in 1974. While the BCP members of the headquarters were temporarily stationed at Ta-ta-Myaung near the nine mountain villages upstream the Bago Creek, the Tatmadaw columns attacked them on 18 October 1974. The BCP chairman and the secretary had to flee in disarray. Since then the BCP was gradually falling apart. The Tatmadaw columns attacked and seized the Alynayung camp of the BCP and the Ma-da-nya-ta near Phasaw Aye Creek in DaikU Township on 1 November 1974. The BCP chairman and the secretary were killed in the military operation launched at a place near Yenwe Phutkya Creek in Bago Yoma region on 13 March 1975, and since then the existence of the BCP in the Yoma region ended.

All in all, the Tatmadaw has striven to consolidate the national unity. It has been holding peace talks with the armed groups in the jungles. It crushed all the internal and external armed insurgents trying to transgress the nation’s independence and sovereignty.

At the same time, the Revolutionary Council Government drafted the State Constitution and held the referendum on 15 December 1973. The Constitution was enacted in accord with the wish and unanimous consent of the people on 3 January 1974. After the nation had regained independence, the AFPFL government ruled the nation under parliamentary democracy system from 1948 to 1958; the Caretaker Government took over the State duties from 1958 to 1960; the Pa-htha-sa governed the nation under parliamentary democracy system from 1960 to 1 March 1962; the Revolutionary Council governed the nation from 2 March 1962 to 2 March 1974.

Throughout the eras, the Tatmadaw has been dutiful in safeguarding independence and sovereignty of the State with all-out efforts, discharging duties in various sectors in accord with the national requirement. And all in all, the endeavours of the Tatmadaw are the unforgettable historical records of the nation.

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(Translation: KTY+TMT)

Battle ship May Yu used in Myanmar Tatmadaw’s fight against the internal insurgency which accompanied the Independence of the nation.
Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Endeavours to safeguard independence

Myanma Air Force used Bristol planes in operations.

A large cache of arms and ammunition were seized during the Operation Htaw Paing which was launched by the combined force of the Tatmadaw and the people.

Mass of insurgents across the delta region surrendered following the active participation of people in the operations.

After ending the multi-colour insurgency in the delta region through Operations Shwe Linyon and Moe Hein, members of people’s militia took part in safeguarding the Independence of the State.

After the nation had regained independence, the AFPFL government ruled the nation under parliamentary democracy system from 1948 to 1958; the Caretaker Government took over the State duties from 1958 to 1960; the Po-hla-ua governed the nation under parliamentary democracy system from 1960 to 1 March 1962; the Revolutionary Council governed the nation from 2 March 1962 to 2 March 1974. Throughout the eras, the Tatmadaw had been dutiful in safeguarding independence and sovereignty of the State through all-out efforts, discharging duties in various sectors in accord with the national requirement.

And all in all, the endeavours of the Tatmadaw are the unforgettable historical records of the nation.
Minister inspects cultural heritage maintenance tasks in Rakhine State

YANGON, 24 Dec — Minister for Culture Maj-Gen Kyi Aung, together with Deputy Minister Brig-Gen Soe Win Maung, arrived at Kyauktaw on 21 December morning.

The next morning, the minister and the deputy minister, accompanied by responsible officials, inspected the ancient northern stairway of Maha Muni Buddha image in Kyauktag and gave instructions to maintain the stairway which was used to convey Maha Muni image. After viewing the ancient northern prayer hall, they paid obeisance to the image and made cash donations.

Afterwards, the minister, the deputy minister and party visited the construction site of Ancient Architecture Museum.

Putin rules out about-turn on privatization policy

MOSCOW, 24 Dec — Russian President Vladimir Putin promised Tuesday that there would be no about-turn in the post-Soviet privatization campaign, but warned that those who broke the law in the process would face punishment.

"There will be no campaign to revise privatization results," Putin told a session of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "The problem is not about laws but about the fact that those who deliberately engaged in fraud enjoyed more advantages than those who behaved in the right way. "Maybe the latter do not earn that much, but their conscience is clear," he said.

Putin's statement came amid widespread uneasiness over a number of high-profile cases involving corruption, including the case of one of his close associates, former oil tycoon Yukos, which threatened Putin's popularity. Putin's remarks seem to be an assurance to innocent businessmen is likely to be about the process seen in some of the recent Russian business trials, where many Russian investors also are looking for a second wave of the anti-corruption campaign. Putin's statement is seen as a result of the current global financial crisis, which has led to a decline in the Russian economy, making it difficult for Russian business to operate. Putin's statement is also seen as an attempt to reassure Russian businesses that the government will not change the existing privatization policy. The statement is also seen as a way to maintain Putin's popularity and to prevent the loss of his political power. Putin's statement is seen as a way to maintain Putin's popularity and to prevent the loss of his political power.
Malaysia to implement more anti-drug programmes in 2004

KUALA LUMPUR, 24 Dec— The National Anti-Drug Agency (Pemadam) would hold 296 programmes in 148 districts nationwide in 2004 to raise awareness about the dangers of drugs, its president Zainal bin Ahmad Zin said on Tuesday. The programmes would involve Parent-Teacher Associations, Development and Security Committees so as to help more people create awareness about drugs, Zainal said after opening the state-level women’s symposium in Ipoh, Perak State. Pemadam, which currently had 88,000 members, hoped to be able to sign up some 148,000 more members through such programmes, he added.

On the symposium, attended by some 1,000 women, he said it aimed at creating awareness among women as they were the most important members of a family.

“When they go home, they can teach and guide their children not to get involved in drug abuse. They will know about the sources of drugs, types of drugs and their dangers,” he said.

Zainal, who is also Deputy Home Minister, said Pemadam hoped to train 20,000 women through such symposiums in every state as this would enhance the organization’s capacity to fight drug abuse, especially among youths.

All China Women’s Federation Vice-President Mme Chen Xiarong and party enjoy Myanma cultural dances at the dinner hosted by Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe. (News on page 16)— MNA

Chinese “IT” company breaks Microsoft office software monopoly

NANNING, 24 Dec— A Chinese IT company has made a minor landmark success in breaking Microsoft’s monopoly of the office software market by signing a contract with a Japanese IT product dealer, Internet Telephone, to sell its Yongzhong Office software in Japan.

Before signing the contract, Internet Telephone tracked and assessed the performance of the Chinese-made office software for three months. It finally reached the deal to sell it on the Japanese market to partly replace Microsoft’s Office series. Internet Telephone has started publicizing its software with self-owned intellectual property, and its overall technological indices have reached the international advanced level in the field,” according to a joint assessment panel of the company’s products.

Founded in 2000 as a joint venture between a local Microsoft’s product dealer, Internet Telephone, to sell its office software with self-owned intellectual property, the Chinese Academy of Engineering and the Jiangsu provincial government, the company said 78 patents involving its products with Microsoft Office users.

The company completed a renewed version of Yongzhong Office last August, which is almost fully compatible with Microsoft documents, giving great convenience to users to exchange documents with Microsoft Office users.

The company said 78 patents involving its products have been authorized in the Chinese Mainland, Taiwan, the United States and member countries of the World Intellectual Property Organizat " "

20 ferry passengers rescued in southern Philippines

MANILA, 24 Dec— A Malaysian cargo ship has rescued 20 passengers and crew from a sunken Philippine ferry, with 55 people still missing, the Philippine Navy said Tuesday. The cargo ship Pacific Valor, en route to Sandakan in Malaysia from China, plucked 20 survivors from the Sulu Sea off Balabac Island near the Malaysian border, the ABS-CBN news channel quoted Navy spokesman Commander Gerry Malabanan as saying. The 63-ton ferry sank in bad weather in the Sulu Sea on the southern coast of Palawan Island in the western Philippines early Sunday, carrying 408 passengers and seven crew members. A Philippine Navy ship was scheduled to receive the survivors from the Pacific Valor early Tuesday, Malabanan added.

International arrivals to Vietnam to decrease this year

HANOI, 24 Dec— Vietnam has so far this year licensed 620 foreign direct investment (FDI) projects worth 1.55 billion US dollars, down 12.7 per cent in project number, but up 13.8 per cent in capital against the same period last year.

As many as 70 per cent of the projects and 68.7 per cent of the total capital covered the sectors of industry and construction, the Ministry of Planning and Investment announced on Monday. Vietnam has so far this year seen 345 operational FDI projects raise their capital by more than 1.1 billion dollars, the highest-ever level.

The realized capital of all FDI projects in the country stood at 2.6 billion dollars in the period, equaling to the figure of 2002.

Vietnam targets to host 2.7-2.8 million international arrivals and 14-14.5 million domestic ones next year, generating revenues of 25 trillion VND (1.6 billion dollars) next year. “To this end, we will focus on tapping large markets such as China, Japan, France and the United States, promoting the local industry worldwide, and diversifying tour products and services,” Tu said.

The administration plans to establish tourism promotion offices in France and Japan, and hold a dozen of international and local tourism fairs, he added.

Vietnam now is home to 250 international tour operators and 1,680 domestic ones. It also has 150 hotels rated from three to five stars with 16,335 rooms.

It hosted 2.6 million foreign visitors, and received tourism revenues of 23 trillion VND (1.47 billion dollars) last year.

Donate blood
Chinese guests tour Yangon

YANGON, 24 Dec — Vice-President of the All China Women’s Federation Prof. Ma May May Yee, General Secretary Dr Daw Khin Aye Win and officials, paid a visit to the Shwedagon Pagoda this morning.

The Chinese guests were on a visit here at the invitation of MWA President Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe.

The guests circled the pagoda clockwise. Mme. Chen Xiurong signed in the visitors’ books. The guests donated cash to the fund of the pagoda.

They proceeded to the National Museum on Pyay Road where they were wel- comed by the Department of Cultural Institute Deputy Director- General U Myint Kyaw and Director Daw Nanda Hmon. Curator Daw Dee Mee Thet Nwe and Assistant Curator Daw Hay Hlay Swe conducted them round the museum. The vice-president of the ACWF signed in the visitors’ book.

In the evening, the president of the MWAF hosted a dinner to the Chinese guests. Present on the occa- sion were MWAF Vice- Presidents Dr Daw May May Yee, Vice-President Dr Daw Khin Kyaw and Director Daw Nanda Hmon. Curator Daw Mee Thet Nwe and Assistant Curator Daw Hay Hlay Swe conducted them round the museum. The vice-president of the ACWF signed in the visitors’ book.

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4th TMME exhibition continues

YANGON, 24 Dec — The Fourth Traditional Medicine and Medical Equipment Exhibition continued for the eighth day at the Tarmadaw Convention Centre on U Wisara Road today. Com- mander of No 4 Military Region Col Yn Naing Oo and officials visited the exhibi- tion.

Various kinds of tradi- tional medicines were on display and available at the exhibition, which was crowded with monks, stu- dents and office staff. The exhibition will be kept open from 9am to 6 pm till 26 December. — MNA

Independence Day Commemorative Essay and Poem competitions prize winners announced

YANGON, 24 Dec — The 2004 56th Anniversary Independence Day Essay and Poem, TV Quiz and Compu- ter Painting Competitions Subcommittees held the university, college, institute, basic education high and middle school level essay and poem compe- titions on 22 and 23 Novem- ber in accord with the objec- tives of Independence Day.

The subcommittee an- nounced the winners of the competitions today.

In university, college and institute level essay competi- tion, cadet Wai Zin Thein of Defence Services Technologi- cal University (PyinOo-Lwin) won the first prize; Ma The Oo of Institute of Pharmacy (Mandalay) the second; and Maung Nay Thu Nyan of Technical Institute (Myinmar). Consolation prizes went to Ma Sanda Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin). In basic educa- tion high school level essay competition, Ma Wu Thant Myint of Thonese BEHS won the first prize; Ma April Tun of BEHS-2, Pathein, the sec- ond; and Maung Min Aye of BEHS-2, Sagain. Consola- tion prizes went to Ma Sanda Nyo Thaung of BEHS-2, Pathein, and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin).

In institute level essay competition, Maung Win Min of Mandalay University won the first prize; Maung Htet Aung Lin of Institute of Pharmacy, Mandalay the second, and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) the third prize. Consolation prizes went to Ma Sanda Nyo Thaung of BEHS-2, Pathein, and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin). In university level essay competition, Maung Thu of Institute of Pharmacy, Mandalay won the first prize; Ma Muint Tow of BEHS-2, Pathein, the second; and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) the third prize. Consolation prizes went to Maung Win Min of Mandalay University, Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin), and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin).

In middle basic education level essay competition, Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) won the first prize; Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) won the second prize.

In university, college, institute and middle school level essay competition, Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) won the first prize; Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin). In middle basic education level essay competition, Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) won the first prize; Maung Htet Aung Lin of BEHS-2, Sagain; and Maung Aung Soe of Defence Services Academy (PyinOo-Lwin) won the second prize.

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Hailing the 56th Anniversary Independence Day:

Emergence of new satellite towns in Yangon Division in the time of the State Peace and Development Council

The Department of Human Settlement and Housing Development systematically established new satellite towns for the growing population of Yangon City, for employees who have no house of their own yet, and for resettlement of squatters.

New satellite towns established and plots of land allotted from 1988 to 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New satellite towns</th>
<th>Total plots of land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Shwepyitha Myothit</td>
<td>33,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hlinethaya Myothit</td>
<td>25,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Shwepaukkkan Myothit</td>
<td>9,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mingaladon Myothit</td>
<td>4,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. North Dagon Myothit</td>
<td>29,839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. East Dagon Myothit</td>
<td>42,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. South Dagon Myothit</td>
<td>47,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dagon (Hseikkan) Myothit</td>
<td>41,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Dalla Myothit</td>
<td>11,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Dawbon Myothit</td>
<td>2,642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Allotted plots of land in total: 247,649
SPOKEN ENGLISH CLASS

10 am to 11.30 am

Multi-media style lab, audio-visual aid

MIN KYAW MIN’S SPOKEN ENGLISH CLASS

Trade Mark CAUTION

The following Trade Marks:

RAYPAK

 được bảo hộ tại nước Cộng hoà Séc

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Notice is given that Raypak Inc. (a California, U.S.A. Corporation) of 55111 Agoura Road, Westlake Village, California 91361, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, is the Owner and Sole Proprietor of the following Trade Mark:-

RAYPAK

used in connection with:-

“Gas and electric water heat-

products, hot water sup-

ply boilers, swimming pool

and spa heaters, and air to

water heat pumps”

A Declaration of Ownership of the said Mark has been registered in the Office of the Registration of Deeds, Yangon, being No. 2928/1997.

WARNING is hereby given that any fraudulent imi-

tation or unauthorised use of the said Trade Mark in any manu-

ner whatsoever will be dealt with according to law.

Win Mu Tin, M.A., H.G.P., D.B.I., for Raypak Inc.
P.O. Box 60, Yangon:
Dated: 25 December, 2003

TRADE MARK CAUTION

Int’l AIDS conference to be held in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG, 24 Dec — South Africa’s Cape Town has won the bid to host the International AIDS Impact Conference in April 2005, which is to take an in-depth look at the changing interaction between the biological, psychological and social effects of HIV/AIDS.

Reg. No. 1745/2000

Reg. No. 4151/2000

in respect of “Pharmaceuti-

cal and medicinal prepara-

trations and substances.”

Fraudulent imitation or unauthorised use of the said Trade Marks will be dealt with according to law.


for LG Life Sciences, Ltd.,
P.O. Box 60, Yangon:
Dated: 25 December, 2003

Botswana President urges “AIDS” testing in Christmas message

JOHANNESBURG, 24 Dec — Botswana President Festus Mogae urged the nation in his Christmas message on Monday to have a routine HIV/AIDS test.

He said people have to realize that being HIV-positive was not a death sentence, adding: “Help is available. A person can live a healthy and productive life for the next 15 to 20 years.”

With a population of 1.67 million, Botswana has one of the highest incidences of HIV infection in the world. Prevalence is at 33 per cent in the southern African country, according to a survey.

The President said parents could still bring up their children, which was an important part of their memory and heritage.

MNA/Xinhua

AIDS is a national concern.

Botswana President urges “AIDS” testing in Christmas message
**New species of insect found in Greece**

**Arkhioura, 24 Dec —** A new species of scorpion-like insect has been discovered in Greece, local media reported recently. The discovery was made by members of the “Pelinoce” Chios Studies Centre during excavations in Sika Cave at the village of Lithos in Chios, an island off northeastern Aegean.

Based on existing evidence, the insect cannot be found anywhere else in the world, the centre was quoted as saying.

The centre’s President, Yiannis Makridakis, told reporters that the insect had been photographed and sent to the Museum of Natural History in London, Britain. According to the museum’s judgment, the unique scorpion-like insect belongs to the category of arachnids. The view was shared by Greek and foreign entomologists, including those at the Museum of Natural History in Sofia, Bulgaria.

*MNA/Xinhua*

**Two suspected Ukrainian human smugglers arrested**

**Arkhioura, 24 Dec —** Two suspected Ukrainian human smugglers that the insect had been declared false by the Bank of England. He bought himself a Ferrari sports car just one day before he was arrested in October 2002.

*MNA/Xinhua*

**Dutch diamond dispatch dropped in dustbin**

**Amsterdam, 24 Dec —** Thousands of Dutch residents were rummaging through their rubbish in a diamond rush after a jeweller’s anniversary sale was converted to standard coal, up from 31.91 million tons to 61.18 tons, while its GDP soared from 75.6 billion yuan to 540.8 billion yuan. This means that the city’s energy consumption for every 10,000 yuan-worth of GDP went down from 4.22 tons of standard coal to 1.13 tons, or a 73-per-cent drop, during the period.

“We thank the Shanghai energy police for their help. In our future development plan, we will give priority to energy saving,” said Wen Qingwu, chief technology officer of the Shanghai Shenyu Co., a local automobile components producer.

Four months ago, the energy police found West company was wasting power, and suggested changes.

The company followed instructions. It gave up high power consumption equipment and made regulations on the use of air-conditioning devices. It is planning to re-adjust its production line and lighting systems next year, taking advantage of Shanghai’s renovation plan for public facilities and reception of gas transmitted from gas-rich western China.

“Through energy saving, we have not only reduced our costs and raised efficiency, but raised our international competitiveness too,” Wen said.

Shanghai issued its Energy-Saving Regulations five years ago, and set up a strong inspection team. They have since examined over 1,000 local enterprises.

*MNA/Xinhua*

**“Energy police” help Chinese companies reduce power consumption**

**Shanghai, 24 Dec —** The “energy police” in this China’s economic centre has helped reduce its energy consumption by more than 73 per cent.

The city government ordered the setting up of an energy-saving inspection mission five years ago, to help companies to run at lower costs in power and energy.

According to statistics from the Shanghai Economic and Trade Commission, the 12 years from 1990 to 2002, Shanghai’s overall energy consumption was converted to standard coal, up from 31.91 million tons to 61.18 tons, while its GDP soared from 75.6 billion yuan to 540.8 billion yuan. This means that the city’s energy consumption for every 10,000 yuan-worth of GDP went down from 4.22 tons of standard coal to 1.13 tons, or a 73-per-cent drop, during the period.

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*MNA/Xinhua*

**Parsmalat scandal widens as founder named in probe**

**Rome, 24 Dec —** A four billion euro accounting scandal at Parmalat deepened on Monday when the Italian food group’s founder and three former finance directors were targeted in a criminal probe.

As prosecutors sought to unravel a complex web of financial transactions that have led Parmalat to be called Europe’s Enron, an escape management team was weighing up the best option for bankruptcy protection.

Parmalat exploded into one of Europe’s worst corporate crises last week when the firm said a document showing $3.95 billion euros held by a Cayman Islands unit, Boslat Financing Corp., had been declared false by Bank of America.

Prosecutors launched a fraud probe, and on Monday, named in their investigation Parmalat’s founder Calisto Tanzi, who resigned last week as chairman and CEO of Italy’s biggest food group, a judicial source said.

Also targeted in the probe into possible false accounting fraud and market rigging were former chief financial officers Fausto Tonno, Alberto Ferraris and Luciano Del Soldato, all of whom held the post during 2003, other judicial sources said.

Ferraris and Del Soldato were questioned on Monday. They admitted providing false information but said the plan had been thought up by Tanzi and Tonno, one of the sources told Reuters.

Parmalat has 35,000 staff in 30 countries and is one of Italy’s best-known brands and its eighth-largest industrial group.

The missing four billion euros dwarfs a one-billion-euro accounting scandal at Dutch retailer Ahold and drew comparisons with the collapse of energy giant Enron.

Media reports said the hole could be as big as 10 billion euros, making it one of Europe’s biggest accounting scandals.

Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi vowed on Saturday his government would save operations and jobs at Parmalat.

On Monday, Parmalat’s newly appointed Chairman and CEO Enrico Bondi met Industry Minister Antonio Marzano. The minister may be required to name administrators for Parmalat.

A statement from Berlusconi’s office after the meeting suggested that his Cabinet could approve on Tuesday a decree dealing with the Parmalat crisis.

*MNA/Xinhua*

**Man jailed 10 years for smuggling women into Britain**

**London, 24 Dec —** An Albanian-born man was sentenced to 10 years in jail by a court in London on Monday after he was convicted of smuggling women from Eastern Europe into Britain and forcing them into prostitution.

The court, following a 14-week trial, concluded that Luan Plakci, 26, was guilty of 15 charges, including kidnapping, smuggling illegal immigrants into Britain, incitement to rape, and living off prostitution. The case was described by the local media as the biggest of its kind in Britain.

“He was merciless in his exploitation of women for financial gain, terrifying his victims by beating and threatening to kill them if they did not comply with his demands,” said Metropolitan Police detective chief inspector Mark Holmes.

Plakci was unemployed but lived in luxury in northwestern London. He bought himself a Ferrari sports car just one day before he was arrested in October 2002.

*MNA/Xinhua*

**Dutch diamond dispatch dropped in dustbin**

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*MNA/Xinhua*

**Olly, a three-month-old orphaned African elephant, is bottle-fed by Wildcare volunteer Valerie Vorster as he is loaded onto an aircraft at Lanseria International Airport north of Johannesburg, South Africa, on 23 December, 2003 in this photo released by the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW). Olly was found abandoned in a dry river bed near Selebi Phikwe, in northern Botswana. —INTERNET**
**SPORTS**

**Soccer**

**Ronaldo pays tribute to Zamorano after farewell match**

SANTIAGO, 24 Dec — Brazil's Ronaldo paid tribute to Ivan Zamorano after playing in the former Chilean striker's farewell match in front of a 50,000 crowd.

"He fully deserved this celebration," said the Real Madrid striker, who left Spain on Sunday night and flew for 15 hours to play in the game on Monday night at Santiago's National Stadium.

"He's dedicated his life to football and it was very emotional to see everyone applauding him. I hope my farewell will be as good as this."

Argentine striker Andres D'Alessandro, retired Colombian midfielder Carlos Valderrama and former Paraguay goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert also took part in the match between an international team and a local 11. "It's over," said 36-year-old Zamorano, wrapped in a Chilean flag.

"There's always a moment to say goodbye. Thank you to everyone. I'm a very lucky man. Football has given me everything and I'm very satisfied."

Zamorano played for Real Madrid, Inter Milan and Mexico's America before returning to his homeland at the start of this year to end his career with Colo Colo, the team he supported as a boy.

**Late Sibierski goal earns City deserved 1-1 draw**

MANCHESTER (England), 24 Dec — A late header by substitute Antoine Sibierski earned Manchester City a deserved 1-1 draw with Leeds United in an English Premier League match at the City of Manchester Stadium on Monday.

City, who climbed into a share of 11th in the table despite nine consecutive matches without a win, dominated throughout but only levelled the scores in the 82nd minute after Leeds had gone ahead with a first-half goal from Mark Viduka.

"It wasn't like they opened us up and I don't think the referee gave us many decisions," said City manager Kevin Keegan.

"In the end, though, I suppose you're happy to get a point."

Keegan added that he had no choice but to bring on Sibierski in a bid for a late equalizer.

"He is very good in the air and he is a good goalscorer if you look at his record," he said.

Australian international Viduka put Leeds in front in the 24th minute against the run of play, taking advantage of a defensive blunder by David Sommeil who failed to control a James Milner through ball on the edge of the box.

Viduka had wasted a golden chance to score in the sixth minute when an Ian Harte free kick left him unmarked inside the six-yard box. This time, though, he made no mistake, rounding keeper David Seaman for his fourth league goal of the season.

City, however, dominated the rest of the half and had their best opportunity to equalize in the 41st minute when the dangerous Nicolas Anelka found Claudio Reyna unmarked just eight yards out.

Reyna, recalled for the out-of-form Trevor Sinclair, powered goalwards but defender Michael Duberry cleared off the line.

City were also the better side after the break and Joey Barton beat goalkeeper Paul Robinson in the 57th minute with a crunching right-foot shot that bounced back off the inside of the post.

City finally levelled the scores eight minutes from time, Sibierski driving home a header after a cross from the right by Sun Jihai.

**Teenager Martins in running for African player honours**

JOHANNESBURG, 24 Dec — Inter Milan teenager Obafemi Martins has been named as one of the five finalists for the 2003 African Footballer of the Year award, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) announced in Cairo on Monday.

Martins, who has yet to play for Nigeria or for the English Championship club, is one of the five finalists for the 2003 African Footballer of the Year award.

Eto'o and the Ajax Amsterdam defender Trabelsi were the only two Africans named among the 50 candidates for the 2003 European Footballer of the Year award.

Okocha's inclusion is a surprise as is that of Drogba, who has only been on the shortlist since signing for Marseille in January. He has been a frequent scorer for the club since his move from Guingamp.

**Sociedad's dramatic slide continues**

MADRID, 24 Dec — Real Sociedad began 2003 as Spanish league leaders and went on to cap a season of remarkable improvement by claiming the runners-up spot behind Real Madrid. They will go into 2004 third from bottom of the table, mired in relegation trouble and with Europe looking increasingly like a dream of anyone at the club.

They closed out the year with a goalless 3-1 defeat at home to Valladolid that had their own fans jeering them from the pitch at the end of the game.

There is now no doubt in the mind of anyone at the club that after the dream of last year's title race for the title they are back facing a fight to avoid relegation.

"We're now in a very difficult situation," French coach Raynaud Denoueix said after Saturday's defeat.

"When we were 1-0 down I saw a fragility about the team and that's tough to remedy. We need time."

At least in domestic terms, the Basque club are back where they were before the arrival of Denoueix as coach in 2002, struggling to preserve their top flight status. Oddly enough, they have managed to take last season's vibrant attacking form and defensive resilience into the Champions League and after coming through the group phase they will take on Olimpique Lyon in the second round.

Denoueix recognizes that the strain of playing two games a week played a large part in his side's slide down the table but he at least knows that this year's team is capable of playing at the same level as last season's league runners-up.

**Porto move five clear in Portugal with 2-1 away win**

LISBON, 24 Dec — Reigning champions Porto moved five points clear at the top of the Portuguese Premiership with a 2-1 away win on Monday, but are likely to be without injured striker Derlei Silva at the start of next year.

Victory over Alverca in their game in hand lifted Porto's tally to 39 points after 15 matches played, followed by Sporting on 33 and Benfica on 33.

The two Lisbon rivals, who both won at the weekend, will fight for second place on the first weekend of next year at the new Luz Stadium, the venue for the Euro 2004 final.

A shot from inside the box by Brazilian striker Derlei opened the scoring in the 18th minute for Porto, the only unbeaten team in the league.

But Derlei, the league's top scorer with 12 goals, was carried off the pitch on a stretcher after a tackle with Alverca defender Ze Rui.

Club doctor Nelson Puga told journalists Derlei had probably torn a ligament in his left knee, and would undergo a thorough examination on Tuesday. Derlei's injury could keep him out for some time, Puga added.

A blunder by goalkeeper Vitor Baia, who let the ball through his legs, allowed striker Joao Rui to equalize in the 27th minute for Alverca, reduced to 10 men for the last half-hour after winger Jose Rui was sent off for two bookable offences.
YANGON, 24 Dec — President of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Win Shwe received Vice-President of the All Women’s Federation of the People’s Republic of China (ACWF) Mme Chen Xiurong and party at the Women’s Development Centre on Than Lwin Street here this afternoon. Also present at the call were MWAF Vice-Presidents Professor Dr Daw May Myo Yee, Daw Khin Lay Thet, Daw Than Than Nwe and Daw Khin Khin Win, General Secretary Professor Dr Daw Khin Aye Win, Director-General of the Social Welfare Department U Sir Myaung and members.

The president of the MWAF extended greetings. The guests briefed the hosts on the ACWF. Professor Dr Daw Khin Aye Win explained about organizational set-up of the MWAF. The vice-president of the ACWF signed in the visitors’ book and those present posed for a documentary photo.

After the meeting, the guests viewed the Women’s Development Centre. MNA

MWAF President receives Chinese guests

Minister U Win Aung arrives back after attending Ministerial Meeting of Trilateral Highway Project in India

YANGON, 24 Dec — The Myanmar delegation led by Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung arrived back here after attending the Ministerial Meeting of India, Myanmar and Thailand on the Trilateral Highway Project held in New Delhi, India.

The minister and party were welcomed at Yangon International Airport by deputy-generals of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Charge d’Affaires ai of the Indian Embassy Mr Rajinder Khanna.

Director-General of the International Organizations and Economic Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs U Win Mra, Directors of the Political Development Department U Aung Than and U Ye Myint, Director of Budget Development Department U Soe Thein of the Ministry of Finance and Revenue and Superintending Engineer (Highway) U Ngwe Tun of Public Works Department of the Ministry of Construction also arrived back on the same flight.

On 22 and 23 December, Minister U Win Aung and party held discussions with the Indian and Thai delegations led by the Minister of External Affairs of India and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. The meetings were held in a spirit of friendship and cooperation and Agreed Minutes were issued at the end of the meetings.

The Ministers reviewed the progress made in the project for construction of the Trilateral Highway from Moreh in India to Mae Sot in Thailand through Bagan in Myanmar which would be implemented in 2004. The objective of the project is to promote transport linkages among the three countries with a view to expanding trade, investment, tourism, human resource development and people to people contacts and to build further enhance development of South Asia and South-East Asia regions. It was agreed that the next Ministerial Meeting will be held in Mandalay in 2004. The Senior Officials’ Meeting will also be held in early 2004.

The Trilateral Highway Project which is 1,360 kilometres long will be implemented in three phases. In addition, the Ministers reiterated the importance of the construction of a deep-sea port at Dawes in Taninthayi Division and the Dawei-Kachanaburi Road link to be carried out in one package together with the Trilateral Highway Project.

While in New Delhi, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of India Mr Arun Shourie hosted a dinner to Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung on 22 December at Murtys Sheraton Hotel. During the dinner, they cordially exchanged views on matters of mutual interests and cooperation between the two countries. MNA

Heroin seized in Muse

YANGON, 24 Dec — A combined team comprising members of local intelligence unit, Myanmar Police Force and Special Anti-drug Squad on 8 December, acting on a tip-off, seized 109 soap boxes containing heroin weighing 2,265 kilos, a pistol and ammunition after searching a house in plot No 193, Kaunghmudaw Ward, Muse. In connection with the case, action was taken against (See page 8)

Pile driven for construction of Twantay Bridge

YANGON, 24 Dec — A ceremony to drive Yadana pile of the Twantay Bridge Construction project in Twantay Township was held at the pandal of the MWAF this morning.

Present on the occasion were Minister for Construction Maj-Gen Saw Tun, Deputy Ministers U Tin Soe Win and Brig-Gen Myint Thein Tun Lwin and officials of the Ministry of Construction, local authorities and local people.

First, the minister gave a speech.

Twantay Bridge will be built on the road linking Twantay-Dalla Road and Yangon-Pathem No 5 Road in Yangon. The bridge will be built across Twantay Canal.

On completion, people can travel from Yangon City to Dedaye, Kyaklat, Pyapon, Mauhna and Nyaungdon townships in Ayeyawady Division through Twantay, Dalla, Kawhmu, Kuangyang townships easily.

With regard to construction of the bridges which are 180 feet and above in Yangon Division, a total of 23 bridges have so far been built. Five bridges including Twantay Bridge are under construction.

Twantay Bridge, 4,350 feet in total length, will be built of iron beam suspension bridge. It will have a 28-foot wide motorway together with six feet wide pedestrian's. The bridge can withstand 60-ton loads. MNA

Minister for Foreign Affairs U Win Aung being welcomed back at the airport on his return from New Delhi where he attended the Ministerial Meeting of India, Myanmar and Thailand on Trilateral Highway Project. — MNA

YANGON, 24 Dec — A ceremony to drive the hospital road in Myoma Ward in Kanpetlet Township, Mindat District, Chin State, was held yesterday morning.

It was attended by Deputy Commander of North-West Command Col San Aung, Chairman of Mindat District Peace and Development Council Lt-Col Kyaw Tun, officials of the Ministry of Construction, local authorities and local people.

First, the chairman of the Township Peace and Development Council explained the tasks related to tarring the road. Member U Mya Maung of the construction committee of the road spoke words of thanks. Executive Officer of the Township Development Affairs Committee U Tin Soe Win and Head of Township Health Department Dr Myint Soe formally opened the road.

The deputy commander handed over a computer set, a television, a video player, a voltage regulator and accessories donated (See page 8)