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

**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

**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

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Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo inspects coffee plantations in PyinOoLwin. — MNA

**A&I Minister inspects coffee plantations in PyinOoLwin**

**Yangon, 29 Nov —** Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo visited Doegwin Farm in PyinOoLwin Township, Mandalay Division, on 26 November. Officials explained the planting of flowers and cinchona with the use of tissue culture, and production of quality vegetables and conservation of rare plant species. The minister sought means to distribute quality strains to the public and fulfill the technical requirements.

The minister observed samples of fruits, cinchona and other crops plantations, lettuces for hotels, a laboratory where tissue culture is conducted to preserve rare orchids of local and foreign species. In Pvedaung Farm, he inspected the thriving coffee plantations and met with officials, entrepreneurs and farmers, who explained extension of coffee plantation in PyinOoLwin and Nanwghkio townships, coffee research programme and requirements.

PyinOoLwin Township is extending plantation of coffee, that grows well in the region, said the minister. The Government will provide assistance to entrepreneurs to extend coffee plantation and markets, he said. Myanmar coffee is a marketable crop, he added. The minister also inspected cultivation of various species of mushrooms that have medical potency, and medicines, coffee seeds, packages of coffee, coffee farms and mixed cropping. He then visited the section where Myanmar and FAO experts are jointly implementing a programme to produce coffee of high quality.

The following day, the minister observes private coffee farms where officials of Myanma Farms Enterprise explained land allotment and coffee plantation plans. The minister met with entrepreneurs and laid down the future work programme and made arrangements to provide assistance to them. — MNA

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**Third Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Women commences**

**Yangon, 29 Nov —** The opening ceremony of the Third Meeting of the ASEAN Committee on Women hosted by Myanmar was held at Grand Ballroom of Sedona Hotel this morning, with an address by Chairman of Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa.

Chairman of Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htwa delivers an address at the opening of the Third Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Women. — MNA

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Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.
Make concerted efforts for national development

The State Peace and Development Council, enlisting the united strength of the national intellectuals and intelligentsia, is striving for the Union of Myanmar to be modern and developed and to be able to stand proudly among the international community.

This being so, it has systematically organized national forces in every sector so that they can actively participate in nation-building endeavours.

A coordination meeting on the holding of the 22nd Conference on ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations (CAFEO-22) was held in Yangon on 28 November and it was attended by Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein.

In his address on the occasion, Lt-Gen Thein Sein said that the government, with the knowledge and skills of Myanmar engineers and architects, was building basic economic and urban development infrastructures necessary for strong national economy and higher living standard of the people and considerable success had been achieved.

Thanks to constant support and encouragement of the government, the Myanmar Engineering Society has been able to stand firmly as a national force.

With a membership of more than 7,000, including engineers both in government service and private sector, architects, construction entrepreneurs and engineering students, the MES is taking an active part in national endeavours.

Myanmar engineers have constructed 176 bridges 180 feet and above long, 167 dams, 271 river water pumping stations, transport infrastructures, socio-economic infrastructures and urban development infrastructures the length and breadth of the nation.

Since Myanmar joined the ASEAN, the Myanmar Engineering Society, like any other social organizations, has been actively cooperating with the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations.

We would like to call on Myanmar engineers to make continued efforts in nation-building endeavours for the Union of Myanmar to be modern and developed and to be able to stand proudly among the international community.
Merchandise exports up in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, 28 Nov — The value of total goods exports, comprising re-exports and domestic exports, rose 16.1 per cent in October compared with the same month last year, to 191.2 billion Hong Kong dollars (24.6 billion US dollars), according to a Hong Kong Government report on Friday.

The value of re-exports rose 16.2 per cent to 178.9 billion Hong Kong dollars (22.99 billion US dollars), while the value of domestic exports grew 14 per cent to 12.3 billion HK dollars (1.58 billion US dollars).

Govt promotion key to Pan-PRD cooperation

HONG KONG, 28 Nov — Government promotion, coupled with market-driven strategies, is a key principle underlying cooperation within the Pan-Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang said here Friday.

Addressing the Pan-PRD Think-tanks Co-operation Meeting organized by the Central Policy Unit, Tsang said policy research is a prerequisite of government promotion efforts, noting cooperation among provincial, autonomous and special administrative region governments in the Pan-PRD region will open up opportunities for Hong Kong.

He said areas within the Pan-PRD region are important for maintaining bases and consumer markets. With a cosmopolitan outlook and a competitive edge in capital, financing and information, Hong Kong will be a proactive promoter and service provider in enhancing the future development of the region.

"Being a cosmopolitan city, Hong Kong can make use of its advantage to encourage regional and, in particular, private enterprises to set up offices here for activities in trading, investment and corporate finance. As such, the territory will become a ‘gateway’ to the world," Tsang said. — MNA/Xinhua

Japanese requests ASEAN’s support for inclusion in UNSC

VIETNAM, 28 Nov — Japan has requested support of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for its inclusion in the reformed United Nations Security Council, spokesman of the 10th ASEAN Summit Yong Changthalangsy said Saturday.

He told a Press briefing that the ASEAN+Japan Ministerial Meeting held here Saturday exchanged views on the need to reform the United Nations and agreed that an expanded membership of the UNSC was the core of this reform. The meeting reviewed the implementation of the Plan of Action to carry out the "Tokyo Declaration for the Dynamic and Enduring ASEAN-Japan Partnership in the New Millennium," which was adopted in 2003. The ASEAN foreign ministers attending the meeting acknowledged Japan’s role in the economic development of Southeast Asia, particularly in the areas of trade, investment and tourism, according to Yong, who is also director of the Press Department of the Lao Foreign Ministry.

The meeting endorsed the draft Joint Declaration for Cooperation in Counter-Terrorism for adoption by the ASEAN+Japan Summit on 30 November.

Chinese Agri still top priority in govt eco work next year

BEIJING, 28 Nov — Strengthening agriculture will again top the agenda of China’s State Council, or Cabinet, for economic work next year, according to the decision made at a State Council executive meeting held here Friday.

The participants in the meeting, presided over by Premier Wen Jiabao, agreed that grain production has turned for the better and the income of farmers has increased rapidly since the government issued a series of favourable policies to boost agriculture, and grain production in particular. Earlier this year, said sources, the State Council also endorsed the Joint Declaration for Cooperation in Agricultural Development.

Although this has provided a major foundation for maintaining economic and social stability and development, fundamental improvements have been made in agriculture, and strengthening agriculture will remain the top priority of the government’s economic work next year, the sources said.

To further boost agricultural and rural development, the State Council listed the major for this winter and next spring in seven areas, including protecting farmland and farmers’ interests, keeping a reasonable and stable grain price to protect the enthusiasm of grain growers, and speeding up construction of irrigation and water conservancy projects and water supply projects in the countryside.

Seven US soldiers killed in three days

BAGHDAD, 29 Nov — Two US marines and three US soldiers were killed in an accident south of Baghdad, bringing to 1,237 the total number killed in Iraq over the past three days, according to US authorities.

Three US servicemen were killed on Sunday in clashes in Al-Anbar province of western Iraq. Two others were killed on Friday, he said.

The US military could not immediately release any details on the circumstances of their death.

Elsewhere on Sunday, five Polish soldiers were killed in an accident which was unrelated to any attack, a Polish military spokesman said. The five soldiers received medical treatment and returned to their duties, said Colonel Zdzislaw Gnatowski.

In the south of the country, a group of unidentified assailants blew up an oil pipeline which transports crude oil from al-Zawahiriya district to the south of Basra town. The pipeline transporting oil from Zubair-1 pumping station to the Gulf shore across al-Dawasir island, was set on fire.

Firefighters and Iraqi national guards rushed to the scene and managed to extinguish the fire. — MNA/Xinhua

1,237 US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 28 Nov — As of Sunday, 28 November, 2004, at least 1,237 members of the US military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 961 died as a result of hostile action, the Defence Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is seven higher than the Defence Department’s tally, which was last updated Wednesday at 10 am EDT.

The British military has reported 74 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,099 US military members have died, according to AP’s count. That includes at least 852 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

A US soldier died Sunday in a traffic accident north of Baghdad, Iraq. — Internet

A truck transporting blast walls burns after it came under attack in western Baghdad, on 24 Nov, 2004. — Internet

MNA/Xinhua
ADB to provide $180m loan for Bangladesh

DHAKA, 28 Nov—The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed to Bangladesh that it would provide a loan worth 180 million us dollars for the post-flood rehabilitation programmes in different sectors.

The proposal was made on the basis of a joint assessment of damage and needs, which was undertaken in September by the ADB and the World Bank (WB) in consultation with the government, The Financial Express Saturday quoted official sources as saying.

According to the joint ADB and WB assessment, the combined losses to assets and output have amounted to at least 2.2 billion dollars, which is 3.9 per cent of the gross domestic product of Bangladesh.

In its proposal, the ADB observed that there would be a gap in financing needs of about 685 million dollars to 730 million dollars even with diversion of resources by the government of the country from low-priority development projects to post-flood rehabilitation of infrastructures.

The Manila-based Bank viewed that the proposed loan would enable the government to finance a portion of the overall recovery programme as well as help restore the economic activity essential for recovery in affected areas.

Coalition fire leaves one Afghan dead in Kabul

KABUL, 28 Nov—The US-led coalition troops shot and killed an Afghan after their vehicle came under light arm attack in the capital Friday, a coalition statement said Saturday.

“A local national was shot by coalition troops after firing a handgun at their car as it was leaving camp Phoenix at approximately 11.00 am,” confirmed the statement.

CAMP Phoenix, a US military base, supported the Afghan Government in ensuring security in and around the capital city. In a sharp reaction, coalition soldiers returned fire and wounded the attacker.

MNA/Xinhua

Floods leave 25 dead in Vietnam

HANOI, 29 Nov—Floods and landslides have killed 25 people and left four others missing in Vietnam’s central region, the Central Vietnam Television reported Saturday evening.

As of Saturday afternoon, the central province of Quang Ngai was hardest hit by floods and landslides caused by heavy rains over the past three days with nine fatalities and two cases of missing. A family in the province’s Tay Son District was buried in soil and rock, causing three deaths, leaving two missing and severely wounding one.

The floods have inundated tens of thousands of houses and hectares of crops in the five central localities of Hue, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Quang Nam and Da Nang. Also, they have badly affected roads and railways, blocking seven trains on the North-South route from running.

The central and local governments are actively mobilizing all forces, especially soldiers, to fight against floods, move some residents to safer locations, and conduct rescue and relief activities. Local farmers are urged to grow subsidiary crops to prevent potential hunger in the post-flood period.

MNA/Xinhua

Indonesia’s Taj Mahal is seen here recently. Tourists flocked to the northern Indian city of Agra to see the Taj Mahal by moonlight after the Supreme Court lifted a 20-year ban on night viewing of the 17th-century monument to love.

—INTERNET

Three ISAF soldiers injured in northeast Afghanistan

KABUL, 28 Nov —Three German soldiers affiliated with NATO-led International Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF) were injured in a roadside explosion overnight Saturday, top officials of Kunduz Province told Xinhua. The vehicle that the foreign soldiers were travelling in was damaged, said Omar, the governor of the province said. “The Taleban claimed responsibility in a letter left beside the blast site, and they threatened to plot more attacks on foreign troops.” — MNA/Xinhua

Explosion hits oil pipeline in south Iraq

BASRA, 28 Nov—An explosion on a pipeline in southern Iraq today caused a fire and disrupted the flow of oil from wells in Rumaila field toward the Basra terminal but did not affect exports, an oil company official said.

Iraq’s Southern Oil Company said the cause of the explosion was being investigated but exports through the south, which are around 1.8 million barrels a day, were unaffected.

Firefighting officials said the explosion was caused by smugglers playing the pipeline. 35 kilometres east of Basra. This caused an oil leak which started the fire.

They said the fire, which broke out around 11.00 am (0800 GMT), was extinguished some two hours later and that the company had used an emergency pipeline to maintain production.

In another incident, a pipeline south of Basra was damaged during maintenance work, interrupting the oil flow from wells to a pumping station, an oil source said.

Again, an emergency pipeline was used to maintain flow from the wells.

Thousands in Turkey protest US ‘massacres’ in Fallujah, Iraq

ISTANBUL, 28 Nov—Several thousand demonstrators followed an appeal by the Islamic Salvation party today in Turkey to protest against what it called US ‘brutalities’ in neighbouring Iraq.

The party’s leader Recep Kutun said US forces were responsible for ‘violence and massacres’ in the central Iraqi city of Fallujah.

Another speaker, former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who was kicked out of office by the military in 1997, alleged that the attack on Fallujah was an attempt to ‘break the back of Islam.’ —INTERNET

MNA/Xinhua

Chinese Premier hails Sino-Malaysian relations

VIENNIA, 29 Nov—The Sino-Malaysian relations have entered a new era of “maturity and comprehensive development”, said Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao when meeting his Malaysian counterpart, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, here Sunday afternoon.

“We would make joint efforts with Malaysia to maintain the good momentum of the bilateral ties, and push forward the strategic cooperation in all fields,” said the Chinese leader, according to a Press release from the Chinese delegation.

Wen, who arrived here earlier in the day for his first official visit as Chinese Premier to Laos, will also attend the eighth summit between ASEAN and China, and between ASEAN and China, Japan and South Korea, as well as the sixth China, Japan and South Korea summit.

On the South China Sea issue, Wen said, China has advocated proper settlement in the spirit of “shelving differences and making joint exploration”.

This is in conformity with the principles laid out in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, and is conducive to peace and stability of South China Sea, he said.

“We would like to find a way of making joint exploration with Malaysia in the disputed waters of South China Sea,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

THE NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR Tuesday, 30 November, 2004

Indonesians march toward the US Embassy during a rally in Jakarta. Source: Indonesia, on 28 Nov, 2004. —INTERNET
Malaysian PM hails ASEAN cooperation with partners

VIENTIANE (Laos), 29 Nov — Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi on Sunday hailed economic cooperation between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and countries out of the grouping, expecting it to promote the region’s growth and competitiveness.

“We should recognize that ASEAN cannot remain competitive merely by strengthening intra-regional cooperation,” said the Malaysian leader at an ASEAN business investment summit held in the Lao capital of Vientiane.

Noting that economic integration process has brought about positive impacts on ASEAN members, Badawi said the grouping now is faced with challenge as how to maintain the momentum of growth.

One of major measures to address the issue is to “extend our sphere of cooperation with our main trading partners through strategic alliances,” he said.

ASEAN is now negotiating free trade areas with China and India, and plans to start negotiations with Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand beginning from 2005.

Urging more cooperation with non-ASEAN trading partners, Badawi said “The synergies of cooperation with these countries will enable us to promote growth, provide the competitive environment for the region to be attractive to trade and investment flows.”

— MNA/Xinhua

Chinese, Singaporean premiers vow to further relations

VIENTIANE, 29 Nov — Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong pledged here on Sunday to make more efforts to develop relations between the two countries.

“The Chinese side is glad to see that the Singaporean side has recently repeated its adherence to the one-China policy and opposition to ‘Taiwan independence,’” Wen told Lee in a meeting here.

“This lays a more solid foundation for development of bilateral ties,” Wen said.

A Press release from the Chinese delegation also quoted Wen as saying that economic and trade relations between China and Singapore are on the “rise.” Wen noted that the two countries have always attached importance to linking their economic and trade ties with their own development strategies.

“This is the prominent feature of Sino-Singaporean economic and trade cooperation,” Wen noted.

Strengthening Sino-Singaporean relations is in the interests of both countries and conducive to promoting peace, stability and development in the region, said the Chinese leader.

— MNA/Xinhua

Two US soldiers wounded in car bomb blast in Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 29 Nov — A car bomb exploded near a US convoy in central Baghdad on Sunday, wounding two American soldiers, the US military said.

The bomb was detonated at about 8:40 a.m. (0540 GMT) at the access to the highway leading to the Baghdad International Airport to the south, the military said, adding a vehicle was also destroyed.

Earlier witnesses said a convoy of several sports utility vehicles (SUV) were hit in a bomb blast and at least two cars were seen damaged.

Four-wheel drive SUVs were usually used by senior officials or Western contractors.

The airport road has been a scene of frequent attacks on US patrols and civilian convoys.

The group led by al-Qaeda linked militant Abu Musab al-Zarqawi sometimes claimed responsibility for the ambushes.

A statement from the 1st Infantry Division said the blast occurred near the town of Duliuia, 58 miles north of Baghdad, shortly after dawn.

An Abrams tank was also damaged, the Army said. No further details were provided.

The area around Duliuia, between the rebellious towns of Samarra and Baquba, has been a focus of guerilla attacks in recent weeks.

— MNA/Reuters

Roadside bomb kills US soldier in north Baghdad

BAGHDAD, 28 Nov — Guerillas detonated a roadside bomb next to a US tank patrol north of Baghdad on Saturday, killing a US soldier, the Army said.

A statement from the 1st Infantry Division said the blast occurred near the town of Duliuia, 58 miles north of Baghdad, shortly after dawn.

An Abrams tank was also damaged, the Army said. No further details were provided.

The area around Duliuia, between the rebellious towns of Samarra and Baquba, has been a focus of guerilla attacks in recent weeks.

— MNA/Reuters

CLMV pledge to further sub-regional cooperation

VIENTIANE (Laos), 29 Nov — Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), four countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), on Sunday vowed to further their sub-regional cooperation so as to narrow their development gap with six other ASEAN member countries.

Prime ministers of the four countries signed the Vientiane Declaration on Enhancing Economic Cooperation and Integration among Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam at their meeting, the first summit of its kind, held here on Sunday, one day before the 10th ASEAN summit.

The declaration would serve as the guideline for strengthening coordination and mutual assistance among the CLMV and enhancing their economic cooperation.

Under the document, the four countries identified their cooperation priorities in the fields of trade and investment, agriculture, industry, energy, transport, information technology, tourism and human resource development. The four countries also reaffirmed their commitment to the ASEAN integration process and determination to explore more development opportunities under the Great Mekong River sub-region cooperation initiative.

“The leaders recognized that due to historical circumstances, the level of development of CLMV countries is lower than that of the other ASEAN countries,” said Yong Changhalangsy, spokesperson for the 10th CLMV Summit and director of the Information Department of the Lao Foreign Ministry.

“The leaders agreed to intensify their individual and collective efforts to catch up with economic development,” Yong told a news conference.

Leaders from ASEAN countries have arrived in Laos’ capital of Vientiane for their summit to be held on Monday and Tuesday, which is expected to accelerate a 2020 free trade timetable among the ten-coun try grouping.

If the free trade agreement (FTA) is implemented as scheduled, the ASEAN countries will form a single market claiming an annual total trade volume of 720 billion US dollars.

However, huge economic gap between ASEAN member countries is believed to be a major barrier for the realization of the planned single market.

The per capita GDP of the CLMV countries last year is only 20 per cent that of the six other ASEAN countries, the older members,” M.C. Abad, head of a unit of the ASEAN Regional Forum, said at the news conference.

— MNA/Xinhua

CLV Summit adopts plan to establish development triangle

VIENTIANE (Laos), 29 Nov — The Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam (CLV) Summit on Sunday adopted the Master Plan for the CLV Development Triangle and signed the Vientiane Declaration on the Establishment of CLV Development Triangle.

The summit was attended by the prime ministers of the three countries, according to a statement of the CLV Summit chairman, Lao Prime Minister Bounhang Vorachith.

The prime ministers reaffirmed the great importance of the establishment of the development triangle to the socio-economic development of the three countries.

They stressed that the establishment of the development triangle not only marks an important step forwards traditional relations of friendship and cooperation among the CLV countries, but also contributes to the strengthening of peace, cooperation among the nations of ASEAN (the Association of South-East Asian Nations) and countries in the region.

The prime ministers agreed to the expansion of geographical coverage of the triangle development area consisting of 10 provinces in the three countries and in eight fields of cooperation such as infrastructure development, trade, agriculture, industry, environment conservation, tourism, health and education.

— MNA/Xinhua

General view of the 10th summit of the 10 Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Vientiane on 29 Nov. 2004 — INTERNET
Sino-Indonesian relations a new type of strategic partnership

VIENNEX, 29 NOV — The Sino-Indonesian strategic partnership is a new type of state-to-state relationship of non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting any third party, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said here on Sunday.

At a meeting with Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Wen said the bilateral ties of mutual trust, reciprocity, equality and cooperation, is aimed at enhancing peace, stability and prosperity of the two countries, as well as of the region and the world, according to a Press release from the Chinese delegation.

Wen is here for an official visit to Laos, and for attending the eighth summit between the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, and between ASEAN and China, Japan and South Korea, as well as the sixth China, Japan and ROK summit.

Wen expects the two nations to expand cooperation in trade, agriculture, energy and infrastructure, expressing the hope that bilateral trade would hit 20 billion US dollars at an early date. He said China will work together with Indonesia to push forward the relationship among ASEAN nations.

“Putonghua Festival 2004” has attracted over 100,000 people.

Over 100,000 people join in “Putonghua Festival 2004” in HK

HONG KONG, 29 Nov — “Putonghua Festival 2004” has attracted over 100,000 participants, its organiser the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) said here on Sunday at its Closing cum Award Presentation Ceremony.

The “Putonghua Festival 2004”, held for a third consecutive year, ran for 12 weeks with 16 school and community-based activities attracting over 100,000 participants. Michael Tien, Chairman of SCOLAR, noted, “In the years to come, SCOLAR will further explore ways to promote the use and learning of Putonghua (Chinese mandarin) among our working population, by, say, riding on our success story of the Workforce English Campaign”. The Closing cum Award Presentation Ceremony for Putonghua Festival 2004 was held with Joseph Wong, Secretary for the Civil Service, as the guest of honour. At the ceremony, awards were presented to winners in the “Best Student Awards for Progress in Putonghua” and the “Most Creative School Awards for Promoting Putonghua” categories, with performances by Putonghua-promotion organizations and the winners of the festival’s singing and drama competitions already held earlier.

The talks, held at the Egyptian Cabinet headquarters here, covered means of promoting Egyptian-Greek relations in various domains, especially in the economic field.

The two sides also discussed cooperation in the tourism industry as Greek tourists to Egypt have reached 100,000 annually.

Karamanlis, the first Greek Prime Minister to come to Egypt since 1992, arrived in Egypt’s Mediterranean city of Alexandria Friday for a three-day visit to the country. He is due to hold talks with President Hosni Mubarak later.

Philippines to seek more jobs, exports during ASEAN summit

MANILA, 29 NOV — Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said on Sunday she would explore job possibilities in the other member countries of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) for Filipino workers, seek ways to increase Philippine exports during the ASEAN Summit in Laos.

“That’s my aim as I leave today for the ASEAN summit today in Laos,” Arroyo said in a pre-departure statement.

Likewise, she said she would look for opportunities for small-scale businesses and boost the country’s tourism industry.

“For our vision is to have by 2020 an ASEAN community enlivened by the free flow of goods, services, investments and skilled labour, and the free flow of capital,” she said.

ASEAN leaders would meet together with leaders of China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand to expand the depth and scope of economic cooperation, Arroyo added.

“A whale is seen jumping above water. Dozens of whales and dolphins mysteriously beached themselves on an Australian island, state government officials said.” — INTERNET

People line the streets, waving flags of member countries, as leaders arrive for the 10th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Vientiane on 29 November, 2004. — INTERNET

Sri Lanka hosts 42nd World Congress of Medicina Alternative

COLOMBO, 29 NOV — The 42nd World Congress of Medicina Alternativa hosted by Sri Lanka opened here Saturday. Jayasuriya presided over the opening ceremony at Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, whose construction was aided by China, and he welcomed the delegates from 140 countries including Brazil, Mexico, the United State, Sweden, South Africa and China.

The meeting to be held from 27 to 30 November will have a wide ranging discussions in the fields of the traditional medicines and natural treatment, ways to spread the CAM, health promotion and protection, alternative medicine in the prevention of cancer and other aspects.

The delegations also visit the oldest Allopaty Hospital and Medical College in Asia, the Samuel Fiske Green Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, which is 154 years old.

Greek, Egyptian PMs hold talks on bilateral ties

CAIRO, 29 Nov — Visiting Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis held talks Saturday with his Egyptian counterpart Ahmed Nazef to explore ways of promoting bilateral relations, the official MENA news agency reported.

The talks, held at the Egyptian Cabinet headquarters here, covered means of promoting Egyptian-Greek relations in various domains, especially in the

Greeks have been the victors in the hosting of the 42nd World Congress of Alternative Medicine. — INTERNET

Singapore to test all pregnant women for HIV/AIDS

SINGAPORE, 29 NOV — Singapore, facing a rise in AIDS cases, is considering making it compulsory for pregnant women to be screened for HIV/AIDS, an official said on Saturday.

“If all mothers had been tested for HIV, and treatment started for HIV-positive mothers, the risk of the baby having AIDS would be reduced from 25 per cent to 2 per cent,” said Balaji Sadasivan, Senior Minister of State for Health, at the fourth Singapore AIDS Conference.

Although Singapore has one of the lowest levels of HIV infection in Asia, the number of new infections hit a record high with 257 cases reported in the first 10 months of this year, more than the 242 new cases reported for all of 2003.

“Singapore is testing all women for HIV/AIDS.” — MNA/Reuters
The only policy due to be practised in Myanmar after 1988 is to cooperate with the Tatmadaw government that has been introducing reforms to ensure national reconciliation and flourishing of democracy. In order to put this policy into reality, the Tatmadaw government held the 1990 elections, introducing multi-party democracy system in the nation. Political parties whose representatives won the majority of votes were to coordinate with the existing government in drawing the State Constitution. However, the political parties were totally opposed to holding talks with the government. Instead they confronted it and demanded immediate government emerged in the country. It has come into existence according to the historical necessity. In 1988, the political unrest led to uncertainty of the nation’s future and anarchy across the nation, and the entire people were in alarm at the highest degree. With an intense rivalry among the groups of the people, the nation was on the verge of collapse. At that time, there was no political party nor leader capable of keeping the situation under control. The Tatmadaw had to unavoidably shoulder the responsibilities of the State. In reality, the 1988 political unrest was turning the centralized socialist economy into the market-oriented economic system, but followed by destructive acts and anarchy, dominating the whole nation. Therefore, the Tatmadaw, the most disciplined force, had to shoulder the duties for historical development of the nation. So, the one that built the foundation for democracy of the nation was no one but the Tatmadaw.

If the forces at home and abroad opposing the Tatmadaw government and making demands for democracy had given a helpful hand to the government that was carrying out these bounden duties, the nation would have been transformed into a democratic one at minimum adversity and sufferings in a shorter time.

If the forces at home and abroad opposing the Tatmadaw government and making demands for democracy had given a helpful hand to the government that was carrying out these bounden duties, the nation would have been transformed into a democratic one at minimum adversity and sufferings in a shorter time. Instead they confronted it and demanded immediate handing over of State power to them. That is the reason why it has delayed realization of national reconciliation and building of a democratic nation. To make matters worse, some big powers’ instigation, political pressure and economic sanctions caused a tremendous hindrance to nation-building efforts.

A careful analysis of the Myanmar history will show why the Tatmadaw government had to tackle the armed conflicts. Furthermore, in the time of the Myanmar Socialist Programme Party, economic crisis occurred due to the centralized socialist economic system in contrast, in the time of the Tatmadaw government, the market-oriented economic system has flourished across the nation including border areas after the restoration of peace and stability. The basic social life of the people has improved unprecedentedly. And guided by the Tatmadaw, the armed groups have returned to the legal fold.

However, the NLD and some political parties founded a Pyithu Hluttaw representative committee and demanded negotiations. From the political point of view, the formation of a Pyithu Hluttaw representative committee implies disregard for the government while the demand for negotiations shows recognition. It is double-talk, which causes obluscation. This made it hard to understand to reconcile. But if the NLD chose the sole path of national reconciliation, there is no reason not to reach an understanding nor smooth out matters. The government provided help to make secure and safe the trips of NLD leaders. The government also extended VIP treatment to them, conducting them around some irrigation projects. This is a pragmatic attempt of the government to restore national consolidation. However, the NLD did not reciprocate the positive attitude. Throughout successive eras, alien interference was found to have been an obstacle and a threat to national reconciliation. In such a time like this, people no longer stand the internal and external destructive elements creating disruption and instability. The country is facing big countries and news agencies instigating national disintegration, imposing economic sanctions, and cutting humanitarian aids. They have drawn lessons from the plight of the peoples in Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of human rights and democratic reform (heal) expired by the US and allies.

It being the case, the peaceful process of transition to democracy has now been in progress with the seven-point future policy programme (Road Map) conducive to Myanmar Society. National brethren are all lending themselves actively to this process.

The modern scientific political economic phenomenon has it that “Human societies write the history of their own, but they cannot create it at will. They cannot create the condition of their choice. Instead, they have to do under the past events.” It is therefore impossible to turn a nation into democracy overnight. This process will take time. Otherwise, democracy, in the words of British writer George Bernard Shaw, is the election by the ignorance for the corrupted fews. At a time when the country is in the transitional process to democracy in accord with the seven-point Road Map, it is high time for the upstanding democracy activists within and without the country to strive with determination for the well-being of the country and the amalgamation of national forces into consolidated ones by giving constructive suggestions on weak points and strong points for national reconciliation.

If they persist in confronting the existing Tatmadaw government to gain the upper hand at the expense of people and relying on the sanctions imposed by some powers, it will only destabilize the country and exhaust the national forces. Nor will it be able to bequeath fine legacy of national unity to the posterity.

It is therefore necessary to hand down the fine tradition of national consolidation to posterity while rendering cooperation in the drive for the establishment of a discipline-flourishing democratic nation in line with the seven-point future policy programme.

Translation: MS+KTY
Myanma Alin, Kyemon:
29-11-2004
YANGON, 29 Nov — Mandalay Division Peace and Development Council Chairman and Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint, and Myanmar Industrial Development Committee Chairman, In-charge of Mandalay Industrial Zone, Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung arrived at the industrial zones development project in Pyaydgau Township, Mandalay, yesterday.

At the briefing hall of the project, officials reported on progress of construction of machine shops, ware houses and foundries. The commander and the minister met with the chairman and members of the supervisory committee of industrial zones, and industrialists at the briefing hall. They also heard reports on improvement of the industrial zone and the volume of shares pooled by industrialists.

Speaking at the meeting, Minister U Aung Thaung said industrialists should make relentless efforts with added momentum for industrial development as the government was rendering assistance to accelerate the pace of industry. He continued that with the economy on the upswing the industrialists were to cooperate in the development projects for industrial zones. He also called for their active and harmonious participation in the government’s endeavours for the development of the political and economic sectors.

Next, Commander Maj-Gen Ye Myint delivered an address. In his speech, the commander said encouragement was being given to the construction of modern foundries, factories and workshops in Mandalay, Monywa and Taunggyi Ayehtaya industrial zones so that the standard of iron works central to industrial development projects would become higher. It was necessary for the industrialists to double their efforts for speedy emergence of modern industrial zones, he urged, adding that that was the only way to win the trust and confidence of shareholders and attract their attention and cooperation to the development projects for industrial zones.

Giving technological training to the new generations would help raise the standard of machinery in pragmatic fields, whereupon high-quality machine parts could be manufactured as import-substitute goods, he pointed out.

He also called upon the members of the supervisory committee and the industrialists to make concerted efforts so that the development projects would bear fruit.

Later, the commander, the minister and party inspected the test-production of CNG cylinder with a capacity of 18 horsepower produced by U Myint Swe’s Man Star Group Auto Manufacturing. They also inspected other CNG cylinders with a capacity of 12 and 20 HP.

The minister also visited the vest factory (Kyaukse) of Myanma Textile Industries, and the sewing machine factory (Kyaukse) of Myanma General Maintenance Industries. In the afternoon, the minister went to Winthuta Shop (Kyaukse), where he inspected the sale of products manufactured by the Ministry of Industry-1.

Commander, minister tour industrial zones in Mandalay Division

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Gender mainstreaming remains an important global strategy for women's empowerment and gender equality.

Prevention of Trafficking in Persons, President of Myanmar Foreign Correspondents Club U Sao Kai Hpa and members of the Myanmar National Commission on the Rights of Women (MNCWA) and guests. During the ceremony, Chairperson of Myanmar National Commission For Women’s Affairs Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Maj-Gen Sein Htawo delivered an address. In his speech he said as we are all aware, the role and status of women in every nation are being promi-

The Third Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Women in progress in Mindon Hall of Sentosa Hotel. — MNA

The Third Meeting of ASEAN …

(See page 1)

Third Meeting of ASEAN …

delegates from ASEAN member countries, ambassadors of ASEAN countries and officials of the USDA and Work Committee for

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The minister and party proceeded to the chocolate factory project, which is being undertaken by Myanma Foodstuff Industries at Kyaukse Industrial Zone. The minister oversaw the chocolate-making process, production and packaging lines, and raw materials and left instructions on close supervision for quality control.

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The Third Meeting of ASEAN Committee on Women in progress in Mindon Hall of Sedona Hotel. — MNA

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Injury prevention, control discussed

YANGON, 29 Nov — The Health Department and the WHO have jointly sponsored a Workshop on Developing National Policy Framework for Injury Prevention and Control in Myanmar at Myanmar Medical Association here today.

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo delivered an opening address. Also present were Resident Representative of WHO Dr Agostino Borra, directors-general, rectors and officials of the ministry, medical superintendents, specialist physicians, representatives of other related departments and social organizations and guests.

The workshop continues tomorrow. MNA

Commander, Minister meet staff

YANGON, 29 Nov — Chairman of Ayeyawady Division Peace and Development Council Commander of South-West Command Maj-Gen Soe Naing and Minister for Finance and Revenue Maj-Gen Hla Tun met with the ministry staff in Pathein on 27 November.

Officials of Myanmar Economic Bank, Myanmar Insurance, Customs Department, International Revenue Department, and Myanmar Small Loans Department presented reports on functions sector-wise.

The commander said that the departmental personnel will have to serve the interest of the people while striving to meet the targets.

The minister said as their work concerns financial matters, the ministry staff will have to perform their duties with sincerity and competency.

The commander and the minister inspected the MEB and the IRD in Pathein. — MNA

Commander meets mountaineers who scaled Madwe Glacier

YANGON, 29 Nov — Kachin State Peace and Development Council Chairman Northern Command Commander Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe met the mountaineering team which scaled Madwe Glacier in Putao District, Kachin State, at the Kachin State PDC office on 27 November afternoon.

Also present on the occasion were Myitkyina Air Base Commandant Col Zaw Tun, senior military officers, Secretary of Kachin State PDC Lt-Col Maung Myo and members, Head of State Sports and Physical Education Department U Sein Thaung, Myanmar Hiking and Mountaineering Association Secretary Dr Khin Maung and executives.

Dr Khin Maung recounted the experience of climbing the glacier, and the commander delivered a speech. Next, Commander Maj-Gen Maung Maung Swe posed for a documentary photo together with the mountaineering team. MNA

Deputy Minister receives President of Olymp Bezners Gmbh Co Ltd

YANGON, 29 Nov.— Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun received President of Olymp Bezners Gmbh Co Ltd of the Republic of Germany Mr Eberhard Bezner and party at his office this morning.— MNA

1st Kasco Open Golf Championship 2004 concludes

YANGON, 29 Nov.— The prize presentation ceremony of the 1st Kasco Open Golf Championship 2004 organised by Myanmar Professional Golfers Association and Myanmar Golf Federation was held at Shwe Mannataung Golf Course in Mandalay yesterday evening. It was attended by President of Myanmar PGA and MGF Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd) and executives and others.

Secretary of Mandalay City Development Committee Lt-Col Maung Pu presented prizes to the golfers who won Daily Best prizes in amateur event, Deputy Commander of Central Command Brig-Gen Nay Win to the golfers who secured the Daily Best prizes in professional golfers event. Chairman of MCDC Mandalay Mayor Brig-Gen Yan Thein presented prizes and round trip air ticket (Yangon-Mandalay-Yangon) provided by Air Bagan to Zaw Zin Win who stood first with 277 strokes in amateur event and prizes to Myo Min Aung and Thein Zaw Myint who came by second and third in the same event. President of Myanmar PGA and MGF Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd), President U Sein Than Wai of Heritage Sports and Golf Co Ltd of Kasco presented cash award to Soe Kyaw Naing who won the first in professional golfers event and souvenir to President of Myanmar PGA and MGF Maj-Gen Win Hlaing (Retd).

Next, he also gave away souvenir to General Manager of Shwe Mannataung Golf Course Lt-Col Saw Nu (Retd). The championship was mainly sponsored by Imperial Jade Drinking Water, Myanmar Brewery Ltd and Shwe Mannataung Golf Club. The championship was organised by Han Event Management.— MNA

A ceremony to conclude courses on Interpreting and Translation No (1/2004) and Work Efficiency (2/2004) organised by the Ministry of Industry, was held at the Ministry of Industry this morning. It was attended by Minister for Industry U Aung Thaung.

The minister spoke on the occasion and presented prizes to the outstanding trainees in Interpreting and Translation Course No (1/2004) and certificates to the leader of trainees.

Later, the minister presented prizes to outstanding trainees in Work Efficiency Course No (2/2004) and certificates to the leader of trainees. Altogether 52 trainees attended the ten-week courses. — MNA

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### Minister presents teaching aids

Minister U Aung Thaung presents a completion certificate to a trainee at the closing ceremony of Courses on Interpreting and Translation No 1/2004 and Work Efficiency 2/2004. — INDUSTRY-1

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### Third Meeting of ASEAN ...

(from page 8)

As you all are aware, Myanmar has always joined hands with other ASEAN countries and worked diligently to achieve the policies and expectations laid down by ASEAN.

We are indeed fortunate to have ASEAN leaders who have a far-sighted vision, adopting Vision 2020 and Hanoi Plan of Action which is aimed at creating ASEAN as a region of dynamic economy and cohesive society on the basis of gender equality.

We’ve witnessed ASEAN women making great contribution to the common tasks and now it is heartening to see ASEAN women gathering here again today to discuss how they can contribute more to the common task.

I am fully confident that there will be fruitful discussions, and the outcome will be beneficial for the women in our countries.

I wish you all the best of luck in the deliberation.

Let me conclude my address by thanking the organizers who worked tirelessly for the success of this meeting, to the ASEAN secretariat for its full support and once again a hearty welcome to all the delegates, and wish all of you a pleasant and enjoyable stay in our country Myanmar, the Golden Land.

After the ceremony, Minister Maj-Gen Sein Htwa, ASEAN delegates and guests posed for a documentary photo and the meeting continued at Mindon Hall in Sedona Hotel.

Present at the meeting were delegates from Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Vietnam and host Myanmar, officials of ASEAN Secretariat.

During the meeting, member of Work Committee for MNCWA Daw Khin Ohn Thant presided over the meeting and extended greetings.

Next, delegates from ASEAN member countries read out reports on Beijing Declaration and matters relating to advancement of women were discussed.

The meeting continues tomorrow for the second day. — MNA

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### CNG shop, filling stations inspected

Deputy Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Aung Tun extended greetings and gave a brief account of the purpose of displaying the booths. The deputy minister and officials viewed around the booths displayed by ministries, organizations and companies. A total of 31 booths were on display at the YTC. — MNA

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### Minister presents teaching aids

Minister for Education U Than Aung presented two computers, a cassette player and 15 sets of ear phones to headmaster U Win Aung.

Accompanied by officials, the minister inspected the multimedia classrooms of the Phaunggyi BEHS in Hlegu Township. The education officer, the headmaster and teachers explained salient points of the rooms. — MNA

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Women, Girls, HIV and AIDS
Dr Min Thwe

World AIDS Day falls on the 1st of December in every year. Societies around the world have been commemorating World AIDS Day since last (17) years. Main objectives of World AIDS Day activi-
ties include the following: to remind the communi-
ties of the society about the knowledge that re-
lates to prevention and control of HIV/AIDS and to
urge them for the better participation and collabora-
tion in prevention and control of HIV/AIDS.

Why do we need to fight against AIDS globally?
HIV has been transmitting throughout the world
for over 30 years. Mainly due to unprotected sexual
intercourse is twice higher in women that than of men.
Nowadays, the practice of monogamy can not fully pro-
tect the infection when they face with similar
situations, and to raise the self-esteem of the infected
women and girls to their peers so as to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV.

Worldwide, the practice of monogamy can not fully protect
HIV transmission among women was found to be extremely lower
among that of men but also the consequences of, or the impact of,
HIV/AIDS is more obvious among women and girls when compared to that of men.

More than half of the HIV infected persons are youths
with the age between 15 to 24 years. Among them,
more than two-thirds are women.

Moreover, the probability of HIV transmission from
a single act of unprotected sexual intercourse is
more than 60% of HIV infected persons are youths
and girls is far higher than that of men but also the consequences of, or the impact of,
HIV/AIDS is more obvious among women and girls when compared to that of men.

In Myanmar, a committee known as “National AIDS Committee” has been formed and is working
under the guidance of “National Health Committee”.

The programme has been implement-
ing various types and forms of prevention and control activities throughout the country.
This can be briefly summarized as follow.

As HIV is closely associated with sexually trans-
mitted infections, activities are also conducted with
the aim to reduce the sexual transmission of HIV.

Moreover, activities such as dissemination of educa-
tional messages to women, provision of counseling
services, provision of voluntary counseling and con-
fidential testing services (VCT) provision of Anti
Retroviral, Drugs (ARV) to the mothers and the ba-
rines, and counselling of breast feeding are being
conducted as part of prevention of mother to child
HIV transmission.

Activities are also conducted for the provision of
safe blood supply in the country. These include
voluntary donor recruitment and education, practis-
ing the self-deferral system mong blood donors, and
provision of HIV test kits to hospitals of various
levels.

As for the care and support activity, provision of
counseling and VCT services, provision of ARV
drugs, treatment of opportunistic infections, provi-
sion of home based care and production of guide-
tines and manuals related to care are conducted.

Since partnership development is one of the es-
cential factors for successful implementation of pro-
grame activities, Ministry of Health is in partner-
ship not only with the related ministries such as
Ministry of Education, Ministry of Rail Transportation, Ministry of Social Welfare,
Ministry of Information, but also with (7) UN Agen-
cies, (17) Local NGOs and (18) International NGOs
for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Moreover, Myanmar is also participating in the
ASEAN level activities, Regional and Global
activities related to HIV/AIDS.

Lastly, activities are also conducted for the plan-
ning, monitoring and evaluation of the HIV/
AIDS prevention and control in the country.

In conclusion, HIV/AIDS is no longer a health
condition. But it is a development problem. Because
of HIV and AIDS, individuals have to suffer chronic
illness that leads to death and many individuals and families
have lost their incomes, societies and countries have
lost their workforce and productive power giving rise
to hunger and poverty, thereby affecting the social
and development status of the country. Since HIV/
AIDS is contributed to deaths and priority diseases in
Myanmar, it is urged that every effort should be made by
the individuals, families and societies so as to
become Myanmar from HIV/AIDS and its impact.
**Swiss firefighters trapped under collapsed roof**

GRETZENBACH (SWITZERLAND), 28 Nov — Rescuers raced against time on Saturday to save up to seven firefighters trapped under the collapsed roof of a burning underground car park.

The men are believed to be trapped in a 20-centimetre-high space in the car park in the northcentral Swiss town of Gretzenbach, where 80 firefighters supported by earthquake rescue experts and construction experts are trying to rescue them.

"Rescue attempts are now in full swing. Layers of rubble are being hauled off with the help of heavy construction machinery, construction experts, specialists and other fire and rescue personnel," police said in a statement.

But the rescue services were not optimistic that the men would be saved.

"Radio contact that was working at first has in the meantime broken off. The chances are slipping constantly," a police spokesman said.

Chief fire inspector Paul Mans said, "The chances are very low that the firefighters will be found alive."

The fire broke out in a residential car park in Gretzenbach, between the cities of Basel and Zurich. Police confirmed six firefighters were trapped in the rubble and feared an additional firefighter who had gone missing in the chaos following the roof collapse was also trapped.

The town fire department and rescue department have also 10 more firefighters working to save the already trapped firefighters. The rescue services are also preparing for the worst.

In the meantime broken off. The chances are slipping constantly," a police spokesman said.

**HIV/AIDS devastates children in Southern Africa**

JOHANNESBURG, 28 Nov — HIV/AIDS was particularly devastating to children in Southern Africa, a minister told Southern African Development Community (SADC) counterparts at talks in Cape Town on Saturday.

Zola Skweyiya, South African Social Services and Population Development Minister, said research into the effect of HIV/AIDS on children was critical for building a secure future for the region and the continent.

At least 76 per cent of young people between 15 and 24 living with AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa are female, according to a global report released on Friday. The report said 57 per cent of adults living with AIDS in the region are women.

The minister said the time had come to collect data on how many children were affected and infected, where they were, the problems they faced, and to develop policies, strategies and programmes to help them.

HIV/AIDS was devastating communities and families and aggravating poverty by killing society's most productive members, he added, pointing out it had to be tackled more vigorously, in an integrated manner.

The social development ministers agreed to unite not just in the fight against HIV/AIDS and poverty, but also to ensure the elderly, disabled and children were integrated into society.

They also agreed to set up a ministerial forum for joint technical development to enhance cooperation and dialogue on policy and strategy measures on social development.

The ministers noted the reduction of poverty in Namibia and South Africa through the provision of social security grants, and the drop in new infections among the youth, following HIV/AIDS prevention programmes.

**Italian motor scooter maker Piaggio set to buy Aprilia**

ROSE, 28 Nov — The sale of Italian motor scooter-maker Aprilia to its rival Piaggio will be finalized next month, Piaggio CEO Roberto Colaninno said in central city Pontedera on Friday, confirming the talks, his company, a premier scooter manufacturer, and Aprilia, which is failing under a mauling of debt, have been in talks since the summer. Colaninno said lawyers were putting the finishing touches to the contract which is probably to be signed after December 10, when Colaninno returns from a trip to China.

Piaggio managers will start holding talks with Aprilia's counterparts and union representatives starting next week in preparation for the takeover.

European Union antitrust authorities this week gave a conditional green light to the deal. Piaggio is the world's fourth-largest motorbike producer with a 10-per-cent share of the European market, where it is surpassed only by Honda and Yamaha, both with an 18-per-cent share, and Suzuki with 12 per cent.

Aprilia racked up net losses of 43.1 million euros last year.

Together, Piaggio and Aprilia will create a group with a turnover of more than 1.5 billion euros, said to include production plants and some 6,000 employees producing more than 600,000 motorbikes and scooters a year.—MNA/Xinhua

**Russia, Venezuela to intensify cooperation**

MOSCOW, 28 Nov — Meeting with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, Russian President Vladimir Putin Friday said “Russia and Venezuela are large oil producers. Much on the international energy market depends on the condition of our energy sectors and our conscientious attitude”, ITAR-TASS news agency reported.

At the meeting, Putin expressed the hope that relations between Russia and Venezuela “will be a weighty factor in the stabilization in Venezuela and the development of the two countries".

President Chavez, for his part, said Russia can always rely on Venezuela as a supporter of Moscow’s vision of international affairs. After the meeting, Chavez said that Venezuela intends to buy a big batch of Russian helicopters in the future. He was confident that deliveries of splendid Russian helicopters would begin next year.

"We are also interested in buying a large batch of weapons for anti-tank and other purposes. We will purchase 100,000 Russian submachine guns, the visiting President said.

On Friday, several documents on economic cooperation between Russia and Venezuela were signed in the presence of both presidents, the report said. The two sides signed a protocol on the end of bilateral negotiations about the access to the market of commodities in the course of Russia’s accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO), a memorandum on mutual understanding between Russia’s Lukoil and Venezuelan state oil company PDVSA, an agreement on cooperation in the containment of money laundering and environmental agreement on energy and fuel cooperation.

The presidents also made a joint statement, reiterating commitments to maintain stability of the international oil market.

The joint statement said Russia and Venezuela will continue to make joint efforts to achieve concrete results in disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Putin and Chavez also condemned “the unilateral trade and financial embargo on Cuba, which has been in effect for over 40 years, and said they consistently call for its amnulment”—MNA/Xinhua

**Colombia interested in Slovak mine clearance technologies**

BRATISLAVA, 28 Nov — Colombia is interested in Slovak technologies used in sweeping land mines, visiting Colombian Foreign Affairs Minister Carolina Jassckson said here Friday.

Jackson made the remarks while meeting her Slovak counterpart, Eduard Kukan.

At least 70,000 land mines remain scattered in Colombia and two people are killed by mines every day. During their meeting, the two ministers also talked about issues like broadening political dialogue and strengthening cooperation in various fields.

**Nigeria interconnects electricity with west Africa**

LAGOS, 28 Nov — Nigeria’s electricity transmission lines have been interconnected with other countries in West Africa to facilitate regional power trade, government officials said Friday.

T O Makoko, managing director of Nigeria’s state-owned National Electricity Power Authority, told reporters “a number of Nigeria’s transmission lines have been integrated into the West African Power Pool to enhance trade in electricity between Nigeria and member countries of the sub region.”

He said the Ikeja-West (Nigeria) and Sakete (Benin) transmission lines will export electricity from Nigeria to the Republic of Benin, while the Calabar-Ikom interconnection will enable Nigeria to import power from the Inga Dam project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. “The country imports electricity where it cost efficient to do so and exports the service where it maximizes profit by so doing,” Makoko said.
Madagascar cuts deal that will allow some mineral projects

ANTANANARIVO, 29 Nov—Madagascar’s ministries of environment and mining have cut a deal that will allow some mineral projects into environmentally sensitive areas of the island’s remaining wild forests, the Environment Minister said on Friday.

Though largely unexplored, mining experts think the world’s fourth-largest island has big untapped reserves of minerals, including nickel, sapphires, rubies, aquamarine, gold, platinum and bauxite.

Exploiting these reserves is a key part of Madagascar’s plan to fight poverty, but the government has also worked to preserve its bounty of unique wildlife, which brings tourists into the cash-starved nation.

Several proposed mining projects have drawn criticism from environmentalists who fear it would involve tearing up more of Madagascar’s already dwindling forestland, where many of the island’s 200,000 species live. Nearly three-quarters do not exist outside the island.

“But the government has worked closely to reach an accord with the ministry of energy and mines,” Environment Minister Charles Sylvain Raboboaason told Reuters.

“The trick will be to put the pledge into action while respecting that in and around the protected areas, we also have a wealth of mineral resources.”

The ruling delimits the area for mineral activities after failing to agree on a rescue plan for the loss-making firm.

President Marc Ravalomanana last year de-lighted conservationists when he pledged to increase Madagascar’s protected nature reserves to 6 million hectares from the present 1.7 million.

But the political will now is enough to reach a compromise, Helen Crowley, county representative of the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, told Reuters.

Rival firms Air France, Corsair and Air Austral agreed to take on anyone stranded in Reunion or mainland France, for a fee of 300 euros excluding airport taxes.

However, many flights from Reunion to Paris are fully booked at this time of year, the high season for tourism in this tropical island.

An estimated 1,000 passengers were booked to fly on Air Bour-bon’s four scheduled flights next week, of whom 80 per cent were tourists. Some 10,000 people were due to travel with the airline in the next few weeks.

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Fiat chief denies GM pullout

ROME, 29 Nov—Italian automaker Fiat chief Luca Cordero de Montezemolo denied on Saturday rumours that US car giant General Motors is planning to pull out of the Italian carmaker.

Montezemolo described rumours that world No 1 GM might sell its stake and waive an option to buy the rest as “just chatter”.

One of Fiat’s main creditor banks in its current re-launch, Unicredit, said it did not believe a report that GM was planning to pull out as Fiat forged an alliance with French carmaker Peugeot.

Fiat denied on Friday the Press report that it was considering ditching GM for a European partner such as Peugeot.

A spokesman for the Turin-based automaker said Fiat and GM enjoyed an “industrial and financial alliance” and that it was not engaged in talks aimed at forming a similar partnership with alternative carmakers.

“This is Press speculation which has no bearing on reality,” the spokesman said.

Italian daily La Repubblica trig- gered the denials with a report on Fri-dy saying Fiat was “heading for a divorce” with GM and that France’s Peugeot was shaping up as the most likely replacement.

In March 2000, Fiat sold 20 per cent of its car unit Fiat Auto to GM.

Montezemolo stressed last month that the alliance with GM was a profitable one which had produced significant cost-saving advantages.
Germany beat China to claim U-19 World C’ship title

BANGKOK, 29 Nov— Germany on Saturday won the women’s Under-19 world championship by outshining China 2-0 in the final in Bangkok.

Simone Laudehr prodded home the first goal after only four minutes when Chinese goalkeeper Zhang Yanru was only able to parry a free kick flighted in from the left-hand side. The Germans controlled most of the game and restricted the Chinese to only a few chances in the second-half, confirming their supremacy late in the game when Melanie Behringer fired home after the ball broke to her on the edge of the area.

The victory was the crowning moment in the 12-team tournament for the Germans — ranked number one in women’s world soccer — who defeated the strongly-fancied defending champions the United States in the semifinals.

The United States, who won the first championship in Canada two years ago, beat Brazil 3–0 to take the third place. — MNA/Reuters

Everton ground out 1-1 draw at Newcastle United

LONDON, 29 Nov— Everton ground out a 1-1 draw at Newcastle United and Tottenhamp Hotspur ended a run of six Premier League defeats with a morale-boosting 2-0 victory over 10-man Middlesbrough on Sunday.

Newcastle made an ideal start when Walses striker Craig Bellamy worked a neat one-two with Dutch partner Patrick Kluivert and sped through to score after only five minutes.

Further chances went begging for Newcastle before Everton midfielder Lee Carsley curled a spectacular free kick over their wall in the 56th minute, while Bellamy had a close-range shot blocked in the closing minutes at St. James’ Park. Everton stay third on 30 points, one behind champions Arsenal, who were playing Liverpool later. Chelsea, who thrashed Charlton Athletic 4-0 on Saturday, are on top of the table with 36 points. Arsenal stay second on 31 points, while Everton re-main third, a point further back.

The main attraction on Sunday was at Anfield, where Liverpool boshed the first half and Arsenal looked to have secured a deserved point for their second-half-display. Mellos, playing only because of injuries to regu-lar strikers Djibril Cisse and Milan Baros, rose to the occasion though with his first Premier League goal — a thundering shot on the bounce from 25 metres out.

“Fantastic result and a fantastic game for all the supporters,” Liverpool’s Spanish manager Rafael Benitez told Sky Sports.

“The players ran a lot and tried to do all the things we prepared during the week. All I can say is congratulations.”

“It’s only three points, but against a very, very good team it’s more im-portant for the confi-dence.”

The result is another body blow to Arsenal, whose season has rapidly been turning sour since their record 49-match unbeaten league run was ended by Manchester United on 24 October.

Arsenal, who are also battling to qualify for the Champions League knockout stage, have taken just six points from a possible 18 on de-mestic duty and would meet ended Sunday in third place had Everton won their game at St. James’ Park. — MNA/Reuters

AC Milan beat Chievo Verona 1-0

MILAN, 29 Nov— Argentine striker Hernan Crespo continued his return to form by grabbing the winner in AC Milan’s 1-0 win at Chievo Verona on Sunday.

Crespo’s 50th-minute goal allowed second-placed Milan to move, at least temporarily, three points behind leaders Juventus who are away to Inter Milan later on Sunday.

The striker, on loan from English leaders Chelsea, had not scored until last week’s Italian Cup win at Palermo but now has four goals in three games after his Champions League double against Shakhtar Donetsk on Wednes-day.

Champions Milan also had their Bra-zilian goalkeeper Dida to thank after he produced a spectacular save in the 58th minute.

Juve have 31 points, Milan are on 28 and Udinese, who won 2-1 at Liverno on Saturday, are in third place on 22 points.

Cagliari moved up to fourth after a 3-2 win at Lazio with former Italy forward Gianfranco Zola on target for the Sardinians.

Chievo caused Milan plenty of problems, especially in the first half when Simone Tiribocchi and Roberto Baronio both hit the post.

Milan were without worry, with Crespo and then Clarence Seedorf both going close, but it took a stroke of luck for them to break through five minutes after the break.

Kaka burst forward from midfield and the ball ricocheted straight into the path of Crespo who fired home with a first time shot.

Eight minutes later Dida produced a remarkable acrobatic save to tip over a deflected free-kick from Baronio.

“It was really, really hard work for us,” said Crespo. “Chievo were excellent and created a lot.

“I’m pleased for myself of course because everything seems to be going well for me now and I hope it will continue like this,” added the Argentine.

Lazio coach Domenico Casi is under pressure after his side slumped to a 3-2 defeat at home to Cagliari.

Goran Pandev put Lazio ahead in the seventh minute but the impressive Antonio Langella brought the visitors level before the break.

Lazio had goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi sent off for a “professional foul” in the 57th minute and Cagliari took full ad- vantage with goals from Mauro Esposito and Zola making it 3-1.

Massimo Oddo pulled a goal back from the penalty spot 10 minutes from the end but the defeat leaves Lazio down in 13th place. Palermo climb up to fifth with a 2-0 win at Brescia while sixth placed Messina were held 1-1 at home by Fiorentina. — MNA/Reuters

Stoppage time goal gives Liverpool dramatic 2-1 win over Arsenal

LONDON, 29 Nov— A superb stoppage time goal by striker Neil Mellor gave Liverpool a dramatic 2-1 victory over struggling Premier League champions Arsenal at Anfield on Sunday.

Liverpool took a des-erved first-half lead with a cracking shot from the edge of the area by Span-ish playmaker Xabi Alonso, but Arsenal looked to have earned a draw after skipper Patrick Vieira knocked in a 57th minute equalizer.

However, Mellor’s last-gasp drive consigned Ar-senal to their second league defeat of the sea-son and handed title rivals Chelsea a commanding five-point lead at the top.

Chelseas, who thrashed Charlton Athletic 4-0 on Saturday, are on top of the table with 36 points. Arse-nal stay second on 31 points, while Everton re-main third, a point further back.

The main attraction on Sunday was at Anfield, where Liverpool boshed the first half and Arsenal looked to have secured a deserved point for their second-half-display.

Mellor, playing only because of injuries to regu-lar strikers Djibril Cisse and Milan Baros, rose to the occasion though with his first Premier League goal — a thundering shot on the bounce from 25 metres out.

“Fantastic result and a fantastic game for all the supporters,” Liverpool’s Spanish manager Rafael Benitez told Sky Sports.

“The players ran a lot and tried to do all the things we prepared during the week. All I can say is congratulations.”

“It’s only three points, but against a very, very good team it’s more im-portant for the confi-dence.”

The result is another body blow to Arsenal, whose season has rapidly been turning sour since their record 49-match unbeaten league run was ended by Manchester United on 24 October.

Arsenal, who are also battling to qualify for the Champions League knockout stage, have taken just six points from a possible 18 on de-mestic duty and would meet ended Sunday in third place had Everton won their game at St. James’ Park. — MNA/Reuters

Athletic Bilbao cruise to 3-0 win over Racing Santander

MAVIR, 29 Nov— Athletic Bilbao eased concerns about their poor start to the season as they cruised to a classy 3-0 win over Racing Santander in the Primera Liga on Saturday.

Sante Esquerru opened the scoring with a delight-ful goal in the seventh minute after centre for-ward Ismael Urzaiz had toe-poked a neat pass into his path from the edge of the area.

Fellow midfielder Carlos Gurpegui made it 2-0 midway through the second half when he scored his eighth goal of the season with a trademark header after a perfectly weighted cross from young}

midfielder Andoni Iralo.

League leaders Barce- lona will have a chance to extend their seven-point advantage at the top of the table when they travel to Primera Liga newcomers Getafe in one of Satur-day’s late matches. — MNA/Reuters

Sporting’s Lindson of Brazil (L) kicks the ball in front of Moreirense’s Ricardo Fernandes during their Portuguese Premier League match held at Alvada stadium in Lisbon on 28 Nov, 2004. Sporting won, 4-1. — INTERNET
Russia seeks to boost trade with Indonesia

JAKARTA, 29 Nov—Newly-appointed Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Mikhail Mikhailovich Bely pledged to boost trade between Indonesia and Russia during his tenure.

“The present total bilateral trade between the two countries is around 200 million US dollars. It’s almost negligible, given the countries’ economic potential. Just trading fertilizers, tea, palm oil and steel is not enough,” he said in an interview with The Jakarta Post published on Monday. Russia’s main exports to Indonesia consist of fertilizers, steel, military hardware and oil. We import palm oil, tea, spices and fabrics from Indonesia. We have to move further,” he said.

Bely, who began his mission here on November 25, said he would work on identifying the areas where Indonesia and Russia have huge potential to improve.

“For example, Russia’s major aluminum producer, Rusal, the world’s fifth largest aluminum company, approached me recently and revealed its plans to invest in Indonesia and other countries in Southeast Asia. I will talk to the relevant ministries and people in Indonesia and arrange a meeting between the Russian company and Indonesian authorities,” he said.

According to Bely, Russia and Indonesia have already agreed through several memorandum of understandings to cooperate in agriculture, fisheries, space technology, military technology and other areas.

He said Russian President Vladimir Putin planned to visit Indonesia at the invitation of his Indonesian counterpart Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

“Putin’s visit, which will be the first ever visit by a Russian leader, will certainly open a new chapter in Russia’s relations with Indonesia, a major power in Southeast Asia,” he said. — MNA/Xinhua

Expert announces SARS vaccine good so far

SHANGHAI, 29 Nov—Volunteers receiving severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) vaccine in a clinical test show no obvious signs of side effects so far, said Zhong Nanshan, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, at an international seminar held here Saturday.

Zhong said that the results of the research will be released in January 2005 after researchers determine the effectiveness of the vaccine.

From May to August this year, 36 volunteers received China’s first SARS vaccine at another clinical test. Eighteen of them received an injection of low-doseage SARS inactivated vaccine while other 18 received a high dosage.

Except for symptoms of side effects of the drug such as fever and discomfort, volunteers showed no other adverse reactions and their health was in good condition.

The antibody in volunteers’ blood serum has increased by various levels, but the effectiveness of the vaccine is yet to be verified, said Zhong. — MNA/Xinhua

Heavy rains leave three people missing in Colombia

BOGOTA, 29 Nov—Heavy rains left two children and one adult missing in Colombia’s northwestern port city of Barranquilla, the Civil Defense said Saturday.

The three individuals were swept away by water and they are unlikely to be alive. Floods and landslides triggered by downpours beginning from mid-September have destroyed 250 houses in 24 of the 32 departments in Colombia. The Colombian Government has provided aid worth 2 million US dollars to 25,000 people whose homes have been damaged by floods. — MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Monday, 30 November, 2004

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hours MST: During the past 24 hours, rain or thundershowers have been widespread in Shan, Chin States and Mandalay Division, scattered in Kachin and Rakhine States, Sagain and Magway Divisions, isolated in Bago and Yangon Divisions, weather has been partly cloudy in the remaining areas. The noteworthy amounts of rainfall recorded were Kyantaw (1.89) inches, Sittwe (1.81) inches, HomaBay (1.34) inches and Ann (1.30) inches. Night temperatures were (9°C) above normal in Rakhine State, (3°C) to (4°C) above normal in Shan, Kayah and Chin States, Tambraparati and Mandalay Divisions and about normal in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Hakha and Mindat (8°C) each.

Maximum temperature on 29-11-2004 was 94°F. Minimum temperature on 29-11-2004 was 66°F. Relative humidity at 9.30 hrs MST on 29-11-2004 was 72%. Total sunshine hours on 28-11-2004 was (5.8) hours approx. Rainfall on 29-11-2004 was nil at Yangon Airport, Kaba-Aye and central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2004 was 112.28 inches at Yangon Airport, 106.77 inches at Kaba-Aye and 109.68 inches at central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was 8 mph from Northeast at (11:40) hours MST on 28-11-2004.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Central Bay and fairly clear in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 30-11-2004: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated scattered in Kachin, Chin, Shan and Rakhine States, Mandalay, Magway, Bago and Yangon Divisions, weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining areas. Degree of certainty is (60%).

State of the sea: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of continuation of isolated rain or thundershowers in upper Myanmar area.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 30-11-2004: Possibility of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (40%).

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 30-11-2004: Likelihood of isolated rain. Degree of certainty is (60%).

“Unintense rainfall warning” (Issued at 11:00 hrs MST on 29th November, 2004)

According to the observations at (09:30) hrs MST today, isolated to scattered rain or thundershowers are likely in Kachin, Shan, Chin, Rakhine States, Sagain, Mandalay, Magway and Bago Divisions during the next (4) hours commencing this morning today.

“Earthquake report” (Issued at 10:00 hrs MST on today)

An earthquake of strong intensity (7.0) Richter Scale with epicenter outside of Myanmar about (1,000) miles Northeast of Kaba-Aye seismological observatory was recorded at (01) hrs (10) min (52) sec MST on 29th November 2004.
Yangon, 29 Nov — Col Htein Lin, Principal of the Defence Services Self-defence and Sports Institute, who headed the Myanmar Tatmadaw sports team, arrived back here by Tatmadaw aircraft this evening after the team’s participation in ASEAN Armed Forces Football and Volley Tournament to hail the 60th Anniversary of Vietnam Armed Forces, held in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

The Tatmadaw sports team was welcomed back at the Mingaladon Air Base by Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chief of Armed Forces Training Maj-Gen Win Myint, Vice-Adjutant General Maj-Gen Hla Shwe, Vice-Quartermaster General Maj-Gen Khin Maung Tun, senior officers of the Ministry of Defence, Military Attaché of Vietnamese Embassy Col Nguyen Van Thanh and officials. — MNA

Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe and party welcome back athletes of Myanmar Tatmadaw Sports Team at Mingaladon Air Base. — MNA

Yangon, 29 Nov — A ceremony to flag off competitors of First India-ASEAN Car Rally was held in Kengtung yesterday morning.

Among the spectators were Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander of Triangle Region Command Maj-Gen Khin Zaw, Deputy Commander Brig-Gen Wai Lin and officials.

The commander flagged off the rally.

The caravan of the rally arrived in Tachilek through Kengtung-Tachilek Highway, where it was welcomed by local people and national races.

The caravan then proceeded to Thailand through Myanmar-Thailand Friendship bridge. — MNA

Rural library opened in Ingapu

Yangon, 29 Nov — Member of Central Executive Committee of Union Solidarity and Development Association Minister for Forestry Brig-Gen Thein Aung went to Pyokon Village Primary School, Ingapu Township on 26th November, met with locals and gave suggestions to provide assistance for repair of school building.

Next, the minister attended the opening of Aung Kyaw library in Mezalkon Village. The library was formally opened by the Chairman of Township Peace and Development Council and the Staff Officer of Township Information and Public Relations Department.

Afterwards, the minister delivered an address on the occasion and he heard reports on requirements for establishment of libraries and tasks to be carried out presented by Director-General of Information and Public Relations Department. After that, the minister and the director-general presented books to be used in the library to the library in-charge. A local expressed thanks. On arrival at construction site of Yekyaw bridge in Ingapu Township on 27th November, the minister drove a stake for construction of the bridge. He met with locals and gave suggestions to them on regional development tasks.

Next, the minister proceeded to embarkment in Titit Kwinphauk creek and inspected arrangements to be made for construction of the sluice gate, reconstruction of Singoundine village primary school, progress in building Htoogyi village high school and primary school in C block. — MNA

Identity cards, car passes to be issued

Yangon, 29 Nov — Those who have already received invitation letters to attend the World Buddhist Summit to be held on Kaba Aye Hill can draw out identity cards and car passes from Director of Department for Promotion and Propagation of the Sasana U Khaing Aung of the Ministry of Religious Affairs during the period from 6 to 7 December. — MNA

Identity cards, car passes to be issued

Commander Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint and officials welcoming the caravan of the car rally in Kunhing Township in the First ASEAN-India Car Rally. (news reported) — MNA

Minister Brig-Gen Thein Aung meets industrialists of the industrial zone at Myanadi Hall, Hinthada.