**Bulgarian President sends felicitations to Senior General Than Shwe**

**Yangon** 7 Jan — The following is a message of felicitations from Mr Georgi Parvanov, President of the Republic of Bulgaria, sent to Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council, on the occasion of the 57th Anniversary Independence Day of the Union of Myanmar.

**Your Excellency,**

On the occasion of the National Holiday of the Union of Myanmar, the Independence Day, please accept on behalf of the Bulgarian people and myself most sincere congratulations and good wishes for prosperity and further advancement of the people of Myanmar. — MNA

* In the battle field, we, the soldiers, are always ready to sacrifice life for our comrades-in-arms, because of esprit de corps.
* You will have to nurse a wounded soldier and safe his life under enemy fire during the battle.
* First aid is the most important work of a nurse in every battle, and deep in your soul is the fact that mental treatment is more effective than the medical treatment in rehabilitating a patient in the base medical hospital.
* Must have the ability to protect and safeguard the air, land and water territory of the nation together with the members of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

**Essence of democracy will be deeper if people have greater sense to abide by rules, principles, laws**

Courage, sacrificing spirit make soldiers dare discharge combat duties

The aims of the DSINPS is to produce medical professionals possessing physical and mental ability, needed for safeguarding Our Three Main National Causes, and nursing and paramedical skills. You have already been trained to become qualified nurses endowed with physical and mental might. As you have already completed your studies BSc (Nursing) degree will be conferred on you.

As you have studied military science, I will now explain the nature of military duty and the responsibilities of a nurse.

In the battle field, we, the soldiers, are always ready to sacrifice life for our comrades-in-arms, because of the esprit de corps. Besides, you will have to nurse a wounded soldier and safe his life under enemy fire during the battle. You will be able to discharge such a daring duty only if you have the camaraderie spirit. And it is also the courage and the sacrificing spirit to face danger that make you dare discharge the combat duty. First aid is the most important work of a nurse in every battle, and deep in your soul is the fact that mental treatment is more effective than the medical treatment in rehabilitating a patient in the base medical hospital.

(See page 8)

**Emergence of the State Constitution is the duty of all citizens of Myanmar Naing-Ngan.**
Work hard in studies in interests of the nation and the people

The enabling of the Union of Myanmar to stand tall among the global community as long as the world exists, mainly rests on transforming the new generations into well-rounded intellectuals and intelligentsia, who are fully imbued with nationalistic fervour and patriotism. The government is therefore nurturing and training new generation youths effectively to become well-educated persons capable of tackling current and future challenges.

Accordingly, it has placed emphasis on the producing of human resources on a large scale who are well-versed in advanced technologies, who can preserve and promote our culture, customs and traditions, and are equipped with patriotism and nationalist spirit, while putting into operation the national education promotion plan step by step.

Patron of the Union Solidarity and Development Association Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief The Senior General in his speech under-scored the education sector, saying that high education and development association Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Commander-in-Chief The Senior General in his speech underscored the education sector, saying that high education and Development Council Commander-in-Chief said the producing of human resources on a large scale is well-versed in advanced technologies, who are fully imbued with nationalist fervour and patriotism.

Moreover, it has changed the high school education system into a new one, in which the ideas of the students and enabling them to come to the nation and the people.

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India calls for developing Asian oil market

NEW DELHI, 7 Jan— Launching its biggest ever oil diplomacy blitzkrieg, India goaded Thursday major Gulf oil producers and consuming nations to develop an Asian oil market and bring about long term and possibly cheaper oil supplies as a means to stabilize the volatile markets.

While total consumption in Asia almost equals the production, the region, unlike North America and Europe, lacks a developed oil market.

“For us in Asia to convert that underlying stability in production (and the prognosis for production) into stability in oil markets, it is essential that we develop a sophisticated Asian market for petroleum and petroleum products,” the Press Trust of India quoted Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar as saying at the first ever roundtable of Asian ministers on regional cooperation in the oil economy here.

Bringing together major oil producers—Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Oman and Qatar — and major consuming countries — China, Japan, Korea and Malaysia — New Delhi pitched for long-term crude oil supply contract and mutual investments in upstream by consuming countries and downstream by producing countries to enhance stability and security.

Energy-hungry India, which ishosting the roundtable to discuss stability, security and sustainability of oil supplies, also sought mutual cooperation in developing emergency response mechanism by building storage in large-demand countries to ensure that there is no shortage of fuel even during disruptions. MNA/Xinhua

Nine GIs die in Iraq, deadliest day in month

BAGHDAD, 6 Jan— A roadside bomb killed seven US soldiers in northwest Baghdad and two Marines were killed in western Iraq on Thursday, the deadliest day for American forces since a suicide attack on a US base last month.

The bombing came as Iraq extended a state of emergency by 30 days to battle militants whose attacks have surged ahead of this month’s elections. The Prime Minister warned the number of assaults would only rise as voting day draws closer. Just three weeks before the January 30 elections, the commander of US ground forces in Iraq acknowledged that security is poor in four of 18 Iraqi provinces. But Lt General Thomas Metz told a briefing in Baghdad that the country was both members of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and lost their lives in Anbar province, which was killed in western Iraq on Thursday, the military said. This was the latest attack. But Iraq’s guerillas have frequently targeted American troops with crude explosives planted in oil pipelines for supply of gas from Iran.

“We have to further improve our relations and need to build economic linkages by increasing trade and investment,” Aziz said. Shaukat Aziz said Pakistan economy is growing fast and with the rising growth rate the need for hydrocarbons is increasing. In order to meet the energy requirements, Pakistan are planning to import gas or liquefied natural gas at competitive rates, he said. The Prime Minister said during his visit to India last month he had discussed with Indian leaders about the joint pipeline for supply of gas to India through Pakistan. This joint venture could be durable confidence building measures as it would create economic linkage and a strong business partnership, he said.— MNA/Xinhua

Pakistan, Iran agree to enhance cooperation in oil, gas sector

ISLAMABAD, 7 Jan— Pakistan and Iran have agreed to promote the existing level of bilateral cooperation in various fields particularly oil and gas for the mutual advantage of both countries, the official Associated Press of Pakistan reported on Wednesday.

This consensus was reached in a meeting of Pakistani Petroleum and Natural Resources Minister Amanullah Khan Jadoon with a six-member Iranian delegation headed by Minister for Oil Bijan Namdar Zangeneh here on Wednesday. The delegation, on a one-day visit to Pakistan, discussed bilateral issues to enhance cooperation between the two countries with specific reference to export of Iranian gas to Pakistan, the report said.

The two sides agreed to take steps to initiate without further delay as Iran wants a market for its gas and Pakistan needs gas to meet its shortfall in the coming years, it said. The Iranian Oil Minister also called on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and discussed various options for supply of gas from Iran.

1,341 US troops killed since beginning of Iraq war

WASHINGTON, 6 Jan— As of Thursday, 6 January, 2005, at least 1,341 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 1,054 died as a result of hostile action, the Defence Department said. The figures include three military civilians. The AP count is one higher than the Defence Department’s tally, last updated at 10.00 am Thursday.

The British military has reported 76 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 16; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary, and Latvia one death each.

Since 1 May, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 1,203 US military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 945 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military’s numbers.—Internet

Seven US soldiers killed by roadside bomb in Baghdad

WASHINGTON, 7 Jan— Seven US soldiers were killed Thursday night when a roadside bomb hit their patrol vehicle in northwest Baghdad, the US military said.

Everyone inside the Bradley fighting vehicle was killed when it struck the powerful roadside bomb at about 6 pm local time, the US military said. This was the deadliest attack against US forces since a suicide bombing killed 14 US soldiers and three American contractors at a mess tent in northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

A US Marine was also killed in a separate incident Thursday in western Anbar Province, the military said.

Nepal entrepreneurs praise Nepal-China ties

KATHMANDU, 7 Jan— The Nepali business circles Wednesday spoke highly of the Nepali-China friendship and cooperation while celebrating the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two neighbours.

Speaking at the reception held by the Nepal-China Executives Council, chairman of the Council Anoop Bhattacharai said “The generous support provided by the Chinese Government has contributed greatly to the development of Nepal.”

“Following the all-out globalization of market economy, China is modernizing its economy in exceptionally grand scale. Nepali people rejoice this development,” Bhattacharai said.— MNA/Xinhua
Two more meningococcemia suspects found in Manila

MANILA, 7 Jan—Two more patients were suspected of contracting meningococcemia in Metro Manila after three have died of the disease, a doctor said on Thursday.

The doctor, who refused to be identified, from the Lung Centre of the Philippines, admitted in a radio interview that the patients, who were brought to the hospital Tuesday afternoon from Baguio City, have been placed under observation in the isolation room of the hospital.

The hospital employees, meanwhile, were worried about the possibility of contracting the dreaded disease, the doctor said.

According to some employees, the hospital does not have the proper facilities to isolate the patients unlike in government hospitals in Manila.

A third victim died of Meningococcemia Wednesday when health authorities noted a rise in the incidence of the respiratory disease in recent weeks.

The National Epidemiology Centre earlier confirmed that two recent fatalities, a two-year-old child and a 34-year-old engineer, were suspected to have contracted meningococcemia near the Baguio Public Market or may have come in contact with market vendors.

Statistics from the Department of Health showed that 27 meningococcemia cases were admitted from January to November 2004, compared to 83 cases recorded nationwide for the year 2003.

Struggling Iraq forces need more help, says US

WASHINGTON, 6 Jan—Iraq's struggling security forces have had mixed results against a mounting insurgency and the United States is examining if more funds are needed for this nascent force, the US government said on Thursday.

The Bush administration’s quarterly update to Congress on Iraq said attacks against Iraqi security forces had increased at all levels in recent months and intimidation made retention of military and police tough in many areas.

“While Iraq’s security forces have shown considerable progress during this last quarter, the overall performance of these forces has been mixed when put to the test,” said the report, obtained by Reuters.

Guerrillas have targeted the US-backed interim government and its emergency security services. On Wednesday, suicide bombers killed 21 people in attacks on an Iraqi police academy in the town of Hillah, south of Baghdad.

A review by the US government last July and August assumed Iraq would have several years to build its military capabilities to conduct its own operations and anticipated this would be done largely with Iraqi resources, said the report.

A Toyota robot. Toyota Motor will introduce robots which can work as well or better than humans at all 12 of its factories in Japan to cut costs and deal with a looming labour shortage as the country ages, according to a press report. —INTERNET

HK investment promotion reaches all-time high in 2004

HONG KONG, 7 Jan—Invest Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Government’s investment promotion department, announced here on Thursday that in 2004 it assisted 205 foreign companies to set up or expand operations in Hong Kong, the record high for the department, representing a substantial increase of 44 per cent over 2003.

At a Press briefing Thursday morning, Invest Hong Kong’s Director-General of Investment Promotion Mike Rowe said these 205 companies immediately created more than 3,000 jobs and planned to create another 4,600 jobs in the next two years.

“These companies have given their vote of confidence in our city and are committed to developing their business with our community,” Rowe said.

In the first three quarters of 2004, Hong Kong attracted more than 24.8 billion US dollars in foreign direct investment. “That’s about twice as much as the whole of 2003,” he said.

The number of regional headquarters and regional offices in Hong Kong reached record highs in 2004. As of 1 June, 2004, there were 1,098 companies with regional headquarters and 2,511 companies with regional offices here.

These encouraging figures show that investors still regard Hong Kong as the ideal location to operate their businesses in the region. Hong Kong’s fundamental advantages including the free flow of information and low tax regime remain major attractions for foreign companies. We are confident that we will continue to attract more foreign investment in Hong Kong in 2005,” Rowe said.

The department has raised its target for 2005 by 10 per cent, to 220 investment projects.

Invest HK helped six companies from the mainland set up in Hong Kong in 2002, 17 in 2003 and 35 last year, that represented about 17 per cent of completed projects, according to Rowe.

Regional tourists rush to Vietnam

HANOI, 7 Jan—Vietnam, which is not hit by disaster last month, has received more foreign tourists in the first days of 2005, according to the Vietnam National Administration for Tourism on Thursday.

After the disaster hit some regional countries, many foreigners, mainly from Europe, considered Vietnam, which has many beach resorts like Indonesia and Thailand, their safe destination for the time being.

Tourists spent their winter holidays here also for warm weather. Over 10,000 foreign visitors came to Vietnam in the first four days of this year.

 donated blood

Vietnam reports one more fatal human case of bird flu

HANOI, 7 Jan—Samples from a six-year-old child in Vietnam’s southern Dong Thap Province who died last month, were tested positive to bird flu virus H5N1, local health official told Xinhua Thursday.

“Observing on Wednesday showed that the patient was infected with H5N1. The child died in pneumonia and respiratory failure at the Dong Thap Hospital on 30 December, 2004,” said Tran Thanh Hien, deputy director of the Hospital of Tropical Diseases in Ho Chi Minh City.

The patient did not have close contact with poultry but went to school passing by an area with bird flu-infected fowls.

The city-based hospital is treating a case of H5N1 infection. A 16-year-old girl from southern Tay Ninh Province is in critical condition. She slaughtered sick chickens for meals. According to Vietnam’s Department of Animal Health, the relapse of bird flu has so far been seen in 25 communes in 11 localities, one in the north and 10 in the south, killing and leading to the forced culling of some 28,700 fowls.

One US soldier killed in north Iraq

BAGHDAD, 6 Jan—An US soldier was killed and two others wounded when their patrol came under fire in northern Iraq, the US military said on Wednesday.

The attack, by guerrillas with guns and rocket-propelled grenades, happened about 2:00 pm (1100 GMT) in Tal Afar near the city of Mosul. The wounded soldiers were immediately sent to the military hospital in Mosul. On Tuesday, Baghdad governor Ali-al-Haidri was shot dead by gunmen in the capital of Baghdad. Also on Tuesday a suspected suicided car bomb detonated outside the command post of special Iraqi forces in western Baghdad, killing at least ten people and wounding 50 others.

An Iraqi boy reacts after seeing his sister and both of his parents killed in the car, in Ramadi, 100 kilometres (60 miles) west of Baghdad, on 5 Jan, 2005.

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Chinese scientists break through in bone marrow transplant

BEIJING, 7 Jan — The World Health Organization has named a new allele identified by Chinese scientists that will hopefully enhance the success rates of bone marrow transplants for leukemia patients.

The allele, HLA-A*110104, was identified recently by immunologists with the Beijing-based No. 307 Hospital of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, while matching hematogenic stem cells for a leukemia patient from the northern Shanxi Province.

The team of experts, headed by Xi Yongzhi, found an unknown gene in the patient’s younger brother who was the potential bone marrow donor. Seeing that the gene did not exist in the international gene bank, Xi and his colleagues paid a visit to the patient’s hometown to take blood samples from his father, and detected the same gene. Shortly after their discovery, the immunologists found the newly discovered gene again in a patient from the eastern Anhui Province. Laboratory work later found the same gene in blood samples from the patient’s parents and grandparents, too, said Xi.

WHO’s HLA naming committee has named the allele and published the discovery in several academic journals, according to Xi.

The new allele will match more adequate types of bone marrow for leukemia patients who have certain blood disease sufferers, for whom the best therapy available so far is bone marrow transplant, said Xi.

HLA, or human leukocyte antigen, is a kind of antigen of the white blood cells. There are three types of HLA — A, B and C.

UAE garment exports to US get rid of quota

ABU DHABI, 7 Jan — The Ministry of Economy and Planning of the United Arab Emirates recently issued new certificate of origin for garment exports to the United States, Gulf News daily reported on Thursday.

These concerns have now been laid to rest.

Earlier, the UAE ministry received the annual quota for garment exports from its counterpart in the US. These would then be broken up into individual quotas to the various garment factories in the UAE that were exporting to the US market.

The removal of the quota regime for imports of textile and clothing on January 1 will certainly have a qualitative impact on the secession fortunes of the UAE’s garment sector, which has supplied such US retail giants as GAP and others in the past.

But it lost much of its edge in the last few years as other Gulf suppliers and those in quota-free countries such as Kenya and Madagascar were able to break into the lucrative US market.

The hundreds in the mid-1990s, the number of economically viable garment factories in the UAE has dropped to less than 20. — MNA/Xinhua

China faces up to aging population

BEIJING, 7 Jan — The birth of a baby boy in Beijing early Thursday marks the day of 1.3 billion people in China, which might have come four years earlier, and it shows that China has achieved favourable results in its efforts toward a low birth rate.

But population officials and demographers still have much to worry about, such as the country’s increasing aging population.

It is estimated that the proportion of people aged 60 or older in China will rise from 7 per cent now to 11.8 per cent in 2020. And there will be more than 400 million people aged 65 and older and more than 100 million aged 80 and older by the middle of this century.

In 2000, the national capital Beijing had 1.7 million people aged 60 or older, who took up 12.54 per cent of the city’s total population.

The aging population poses a serious challenge to the support for the elderly, social security, social welfare and services. Chen Yi, vice-chairman of the Beijing Municipal Old-age Association, told a recent forum on population and development in Beijing.

“Chen said that in 2000 every 100 working persons supported 28 people, including 17 children and 11 aged people in Beijing. In comparison with 1990, the number of children supported by every 100 working persons dropped by 12 but the number of aged being supported rose by two.” — MNA/Xinhua

One drowned as US troops throw two Iraqis into Tigris River

FORT HOOD (Texas), 7 Jan — US troops threw two Iraqi civilians into the Tigris River and laughed as one of them drowned, the survivor said on Wednesday.

Army Sergeant 1st Class Tracy Perkins faces more than 25 years of confinement on charges of involuntary manslaughter, aggravated assault and obstruction of justice. He is accused of killing the Iraqi by having subordinates force him off a ledge about 10 feet to 12 feet above the Tigris.

Marwan Fadil, who was forced off the bridge along with his cousin Hassoun, testified that US soldiers tossed the two at gunpoint off a bridge and laughed as his relative drowned, after the two had begged for mercy.

“We started to beg them not to throw us in the water. We said in English, ‘please, please’, but it was in vain,” Fadil said, speaking through a translator.

A pathologist who examined a videotape of the body reported to be Hassoun said it could not have been in the water for two weeks. Hassoun’s relatives said they had found his body lying face down in the Tigris 12 days after the pair was forced from the bridge.

“After two weeks there would be almost complete skeletonization of the facial features,” said Dr. Elizabeth Peacock, who works in Austin, Texas.

Army crime scene investigator Irene Cintron told the panel on Tuesday that no body was recovered or exhumed after Hassoun’s family said it buried him.

GM says sales in China up 27% in 2004

WASHINGTON, 7 Jan — General Motors Corp said on Thursday that its sales in China increased by 27.2 per cent last year and it plans to introduce 10 new or upgraded models in 2005.

“They could not exist in the inter-

For GM and our domestic joint ventures in China, 2004 represented a solid year,” Chairman and Chief Executive of GM’s China Group Phil Murthaugh said in Detroit.

Despite an overall slowdown in the growth of the vehicle market in mid-2004, we maintained our momentum by introducing new and upgraded products and services,” he said.

GM reported that its Asia Pacific operations earned 101 million US dollars in the third quarter of 2004, one quarter of the company’s overall earnings.

But that was down from 162 million dollars in the year-ago period.

GM also said its share of the world’s fastest-growing automotive market rose to 9.3 per cent in 2004, up from 8.5 per cent in 2003.

GM’s share ranks second behind Volkswagen which had a share of 26.4 per cent in 2004.

Samsung phones, South Korea’s Samsung Electronics Co, has developed the world’s first mobile phone with the capability to convert spoken words into text messages.—INTERNET

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GM's China Group Phil Murthaugh said in Detroit.

GM also said its share of the world’s f a s t e s t - g r o w i n g
Chinese students in Beijing surfing the Internet. Chinese authorities have called for greater surveillance of Internet content, warning the English language’s current domination of the medium poses a serious danger to Chinese people and culture.—INTERNET

Traditional Japanese firefighters display their balancing skills atop bamboo ladders during a New Year demonstration by the fire brigade in Tokyo on 6 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

Venezuelan Govt considering to buy satellite
CARACAS, 7 Jan — The Venezuelan Government is evaluating offers from Argentina, China, India, Russia and Ukraine for the purchase of a communication satellite, Venezuelan Science and Technology Minister Marlene Cordova said recently.

At a news conference here, Cordova said both technical and business conditions are considered, including the trajectory of these countries’ satellites.

She added that by March the authorities expect to conclude the evaluation of the offers and present a report to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez who will make a final decision.

If the purchase is made, the satellite would be exclusively used by Venezuela, but not for commercial companies, she said.

Costs, security and information sovereignty are also under consideration, she added.

The minister said the government is also considering to acquire a terrestrial observation camera, which would be placed in a state-owned aircraft.

She explained that this equipment would allow the Venezuelan authorities to monitor the national territory in terms of development and environmental protection.

MNA/Xinhua

Chirac makes new call on “international tax”
PARIS, 7 Jan—President Jacques Chirac made a new call on Thursday for an “international tax”, saying such a levy would help generate funds to help poor countries and those hit by disasters.

“These events stress the need to increase public aid towards development and to find innovative financing mechanisms such as an international taxation,” Chirac said in a New Year speech to the Paris diplomatic corps.

He said France would press the international tax idea this year at meetings of the Group of Eight — the G-7 rich countries plus Russia — and at the United Nations, but gave no details of his proposals.

France has also supported Britain’s proposal for an International Finance Facility to double Third World aid, but continues to push its “international tax” as an additional idea.

Chirac made the tax proposal at a meeting of the Group of Eight — the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada and Russia — last year but won little support from the other powers for the idea.

A working group appointed by Chirac suggested in a report last year that such taxes could be levied on arms sales, financial transactions, company profits and fares for air and sea travel.

MNA/Xinhua

Zimbabweans urged to consume diversified food to fight malnutrition
HARARE, 7 Jan—Zimbabwean Minister of Science and Technology Olivia Muchena has called on local people to consume diversified food in order to fight nutritional problems the country is currently facing, local media reported on Wednesday.

She said this Tuesday at a Press conference to announce the inaugural Zimbabwe Food Fair to be held on January 27-29 this year.

“This is a key strategy in the ongoing battle against Zimbabwe’s food, and nutrition problems,” Muchena said.

“We are more likely to meet nutritional requirements and be a healthier nation if we consume a diversified diet.”

Muchena said the country had three main categories of nutritional problems and these were protein energy malnutrition especially among young children, vitamins and mineral deficiencies.

The minister reiterated the need for a diversified diet for both rural and urban communities as a way of increasing food options.

She appealed to Zimbabweans to desist from shunning traditional foods in favour of Western foods.

“The limited consumption of traditional diet has been linked to the perception that traditional foods are inferior to Western diet, yet the West is now adopting traditional diets as they have been shown to be healthy,” she said.

The fair has been organized by the Food and Nutrition Council, a department within the Scientific Industrial Research and Development Centre under the theme “Promoting a Diversified Diet for Better Nutrition and Health.” Meanwhile, preparations for the fair have reached an advanced stage with over 70 exhibitors having already confirmed their participation.

MNA/Xinhua

Property prices rise 32.1% in South Africa
JOHANNESBURG, 7 Jan—South Africa’s property prices rose 32.1 per cent in 2004, South African banking group Absa (ASA) said on Wednesday.

In December 2004, the monthly Absa house price index rose by 3.6 per cent in nominal year-on-year terms and the November increase in the index was revised to 34.6 per cent.

The Absa house price index is based on the total purchase price of houses in the 80 square metres to 400 square metres category, valued at about 350,000 US dollars or less in 2004.

In real terms, year-on-year growth of 29.7 per cent was recorded in November 2004 compared with a revised growth rate of 32.3 per cent in October.

Turning to the outlook for property prices, Absa said the trade weighted exchange rate of the rand was expected to remain relatively strong during the course of 2005, with consumer price index (headline consumer price inflation excluding the effect of mortgage interest rates) forecast to remain within the target range of 3 per cent to 6 per cent in 2005.

“Against this background, the mortgage rate is projected to drop somewhat further in February,” Reuters

MNA/Xinhua

BA reports better-than-expected December passenger numbers
LONDON, 7 Jan—British Airways Plc reported better-than-expected December passenger numbers and a robust first and business class market on Thursday, pushing its shares up more than 5 per cent.

BA, Europe’s second-largest airline, said passenger numbers in the month rose 3.2 per cent year-on-year, with growth in lucrative premium traffic outstripping rises in economy class travellers.

“There is an encouraging trend in the passenger mix with premium rising higher than non-premium,” BNP Paribas analyst Gabe van Klaveren said. BA shares rose 5.1 per cent to 242-3/4 pence by 1547 GMT, their highest level since July last year.

Analysts said the pick-up in premium travel was a rare piece of good news for the carrier which has been dogged by high fuel prices, lower fares due to stiff competition, and flight disruptions.

“Any market conditions remained ‘broadly unchanged’ but said the December traffic figures now made it impossible to reaffirm earlier forecasts for 2-3 per cent annual revenue growth.

“These numbers in terms of the volumes and mix in December may have been a bit better than we anticipated, and we will see what actually comes through when we get what the revenue numbers actually are,” George Stinnes, BA’s head of investor relations told reporters.

Passengers in December, one of the airline industry’s busiest months, rose 3.2 per cent year-on-year to 8.747 million. BA said market conditions remained “broadly unchanged” but said the December traffic figures now made it impossible to reaffirm earlier forecasts for 2-3 per cent annual revenue growth.

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Thanks to the article “Let us use CNG that is cheap and environmental friendly” I read in the dailies issued on 19 December 2004, the urge in my mind made me visit Hlinethaya and Shwepyitha industrial zones, where installation of CNGs or compressed natural gas engines in motor vehicles was under way, the other day.

I spent the whole morning watching CNG-installed vehicles and test driving of the cars at the two industrial zones. The CNG cars were converted from diesel or petrol-powered automobiles. At the initial stage, 1,467 petrol cars and 3,533 diesel cars totalling 5,000 will be transformed into CNG vehicles.

Depending on the use of natural gas, there are four methods of CNG installation. The first is the bi-fuel system, which can be used in both the petrol- and natural gas run cars in turn. A switch is fixed for the purpose. The second is the duel-fuel system, which can run an engine with diesel and natural gas at the same time. During the visit, an official who was conducting me around the industrial zones, said, “The 2000 CC kit will be the single system for all the petrol-run cars. A total of 1,377 under 6000 CC diesel cars will be transformed into CNG-run cars. Another 2,156 diesel cars of over 6000 CC will also be installed with CNG engines.

“Depending on the use of natural gas, there are four methods of CNG installation. The first is the bi-fuel system, which can be used in both the petrol- and natural gas run cars in turn. A switch is fixed for the purpose. The second is the duel-fuel system, which can run an engine with diesel and natural gas at the same time. However, the system-installed car can run only with diesel fuel when the gas runs out; and it cannot run on gas when diesel runs out. The remaining two systems — the dedicated conversion system, and the original built-in CNG vehicle system — can run a car only with CNG.

“What is the reason behind the CNG substitution?”, I inquired.

“Ah, nowadays, the largest volume of passengers or goods are being carried by cars. Thus, we are facing the danger of carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxide, which are the exhausts of cars. These gases are the culprits of the greenhouse-effect, and if inhaled, they can cause respiratory problems or other ailments. Hence, both the industrialized nations and the developing countries alike are turning to natural gas or the clean fuel to reduce emission of dangerous gases from cars.”

“Are there any other benefits?”

“The world nations are finding ways to use the natural resources more effectively. As for Myanmar, she has an abundant supply of gas reserves both onshore and offshore, although her production of petrol and diesel does not meet the local demand. And it is the reason behind the programme to substitute petrol and diesel with gas. The locally produced gas will be more cost effective than petrol and diesel. Besides, the use of natural gas will help improve the environmental situation, as there will be dramatic reduction in emission of dangerous gases polluting the atmosphere.”

He continued to say, “the Head of State himself has given guidance on converting cars into CNG vehicles. Now we are trying to materialize the guidance to increase the use of natural gas as substitution to imported petrol and diesel.”

“By the way, what about the engine life for using the CNG?”

“As natural gas is a clean fuel, it has less adverse effects on the engine. Engine oil can be used longer in CNG cars than in petrol and diesel cars. Thus, the engine life of a CNG car is two or three times longer than that of a petrol and diesel car. The gas cylinders are being manufactured in accord with the required safety standards. During test run, the process of gas refilling and release has been conducted again and again to ascertain the safety of cylinders. The cylinders do not explode even if they are put into fire, and their valves are extra safe. They can withstand highly intensified pressures. But the cylinders should be checked every three or five years. In some countries the life span of a cylinder is guaranteed up to 15 years.”

All in all, the use of CNG will reduce cost, lengthen the life span of car engines, reduce nation’s expenditure on diesel and petrol imports and help improve the environment.

(Translation: TMT)

* * *
Every endeavour of the Tatmadaw members is for non-disintegration of the Union, non-disintegration of the national solidarity, and perpetuation of sovereignty. With goodwill and national outlook, you will have to serve the health care services of the villages covered by the five rural development tasks at every place you are assigned to.

And it signifies the nobility of the nursing profession. Hence, I would like to urge you to discharge your duties in accord with the motto — skilled and helpful medical soldiers.

Ours is a patriotic armed forces. You must have the ability to protect and safeguard the air, land and water territory of the nation together with the members of the Army, Navy and Air Force. The Tatmadaw has the power to launch a conventional war with its four aspects of military operation, and if required, it can employ people’s militia strategy including guerrilla tactics. In this context, arrangements are under way to train every military personnel to be skilled in infantry warfare. So, you should have the skill to serve as junior infantry leaders. A patriotic soldier must be dutiful in every sector he is assigned to in the State as well as in the Armed Forces. Because it is a must for all of you. You will continue to attend infantry platoon commander course, infantry company commander course and infantry battalion commander course according to your rank.

Every endeavour of the Tatmadaw members is for non-disintegration of the national solidarity and perpetuation of sovereignty. With goodwill and national outlook, you will be assigned to in the State and Union. For all of you, it is a must for you to collectively take part in the drive to build a discipline-flourishing democratic nation, while keeping in the fore Our Three Main National Causes. As you all know, our country had suffered the impact of the ‘divide and rule’ policy of the colonialists for many years. In consequence of it, the danger of Union disintegration still casts a shadow on our country. Since yore, our ethnic groups numbering over one hundred have been living in unity and amity at every corner of the country. To this day, the national ethnic groups are living in solidarity in all the states and divisions. This being the case, the State Peace and Development Council is holding the National Convention after laying down the seven-point Road Map. Now, the delegates to the National Convention are holding discussions in coordination in connection with the formulation of basic principles and detailed basic principles, given every approach to the equal portion of rights which the national people have never enjoyed before. Putting their own interest first rather than that of the country, a handful of people holding pessimistic attitude towards the National Convention are plotting wicked schemes and committing misconduct to bring a halt to the ongoing National Convention. Therefore, you all will have to acquire four outlooks, political, economic, administrative and defence, while joining hands with the entire mass of national people for the successful implementation of the seven-point Road Map.

Besides B.Sc. Nursing, such degrees as B.Sc. Pharmacy, B.Sc. Pharmacology (Diagnosis), B.Sc. Pharmacology (Radiology), and B.Sc. Pharmacology (Physical treatment) will be taught at the Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science in future.

Brilliant students will be granted scholarship for post-graduate courses at home and abroad. Therefore, you will have to work hard to set a shining example of good male nurses.

(See page 9)
Essence of democracy will be deeper if people have greater sense to abide by rules, principles, laws

Since you are all military male nurses, you are responsible to uphold the 12 fine traditions and the prestige of the Tatmadaw. Our Tatmadaw is patriotic one. It was formed with the offspring of the people. Therefore, it is always ready to sacrifice itself for the people. The members of the Tatmadaw will take great pains in defence of the country, when it comes to personal interest, whether they get their salaries and food rations. Only then will you be able to establish a significant life of Tatmadawman.

So noble and exemplary is your profession, for you all are the ones who will engage in disease control and prevention, health promotion, medical treatment and rehabilitation. Moreover, you all are to work hard to become ones who can be of great help to the drive for the health and fitness of the entire national people.

You all are to take care of the health of national people living respective regions in conducting health care on a national scale. You will thus acquire the knowledge of health management.

To sum up, you all are to:

— safeguard Our Three Main National Causes, which is the national policy with Union Spirit
— preserve the 12 fine traditions of the Tatmadaw as an inherent duty,
— try your utmost to become kind-hearted male nurses,
— act according to the motto of the Defence Services medical unit,
— be a helping hand for the people while taking care of public health in line with five rural development plans, and
— cooperate with the people in the successful implementation of the seven-point Road Map for the establishment of a discipline-flourishing democracy.

Also present on the occasion were Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Adjutant-General Lt-Gen Thein Sein, Members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Chief of Armed Forces
60th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

Objectives

— To work in concert with the people to achieve success in implementation of the seven-point Road Map for emergence of a peaceful, modern, developed and discipline-flourishing democratic nation
— To exert energetic efforts in carrying out the five rural development tasks
— To strive hand in hand with the people for successful realization of the twelve State Objectives while upholding Our Three Main National Causes
— To build a strong, efficient and modern Tatmadaw

Roads, bridge, tubewell opened in honour of Independence Day

YANGON, 7 Jan — The concrete road in new Myoma Ward in Mongtung Township was opened in honour of the 57th Anniversary Independence Day on 20 December.

Director of Shan State (East) Development Affairs Committee U Tin Soe and Mongtung Town- ship USDA Secretary U Sai Aung Kyi formally opened the road.

Similarly, the Kalaw railway station road was put back into service in Kalaw.

On 30 December, a tube-well was launched in Saikpyo Village of Nyaungshwe Township. On 27 December, Shukhintha concrete road and the wooden bridge in Phayagyai Road were commissioned in Loulem.

Local authorities and departmental officials formally cut the ribbon to open the respective roads and bridges. — MNA

Measures for observance of 58th Anniversary Union Day coordinated

YANGON, 7 Jan — The Information Subcommittee and the Exhibition Subcommittee held a meeting for observance of the 58th Anniversary Union Day (2005) at the Information and Public Relations Department on Pansodan Street here this morning.

Chairman of the subcommittee Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein delivered an introductory speech.

Members of the subcommittees and officials of the work groups reported on matters related to information and staging booths sector-wise; and departmental officials and representatives of district Peace and Development Councils, on arrangements for pavilions of respective ministries and four districts.

The chairman of the subcommittees assessed the reports and gave concluding remarks. — MNA
More room should be given to film industry to make new creations without harming national culture and traditions

Information Minister meets officials of Myanmar Motion Picture Promotion Scrutinization Committee, Motion Picture and Video Censor Board

YANGON, 7 Jan—With the aim of promoting the standard of Myanmar Motion Picture, Minister for Information Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan met with officials of Myanmar Motion Picture Promotion Scrutinization Committee and Motion Picture and Video Censor Board at the meeting hall of the Ministry of Information at 2 pm yesterday and gave necessary instructions. Also present on the occasion were Deputy Minister for Information Brig-Gen Aung Thein, Brig-Gen Khin Aung Myint of the Ministry of Defence, members of Myanmar Motion Picture Promotion Scrutinization Committee and Motion Picture and Video Censor Board and others.

In his address, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan said that some countries have been running film industry as a lucrative industry; that although Myanmar film industry has passed its golden jubilee period, it is required to reach its deserving standard.

At present, there has been an influx of foreign films and videos into Myanmar because of few production of local films and lack of the required standards. Accordingly, the nation has to use foreign exchange for the entertainment and it has been subject to the constant penetration of foreign culture. As a result, the nation has to suffer losses in all aspects.

Therefore, the production of Myanmar films of higher standard amounts to promoting and safeguarding national culture and traditions of the nation, he reiterated. The minister said that the production of films will require certain degree for the films to have an artistic value. Creativity has been permitted to a higher standard. Creativity has been permitted to a certain degree for the films to have an artistic value. More room should be given to the film industry to make new creations without harming the traditions and culture of the nation, he reiterated. The minister said that the production of films will require certain degree for the films to have an artistic value. Creativity has been permitted to a higher standard. Creativity has been permitted to a certain degree for the films to have an artistic value.

Next, those present on the occasion presented their suggestions on promotion of Myanmar films.

In response to the presentation, the minister gave instructions, saying that the scrutinization of stories will be conducted as ever before and remedial measures will have to be taken on a gradual basis for the successful realization of the objective.

The Myanmar Motion Picture Asaiyon and the Censor Board are to hold a meeting to make the producers know the opportunity to create the stories of higher standard. Creativity has been permitted to a certain degree for the films to have an artistic value. More room should be given to the film industry to make new creations without harming the traditions and culture of the nation, he reiterated. The minister said that the production of films will require certain degree for the films to have an artistic value. Creativity has been permitted to a higher standard. Creativity has been permitted to a certain degree for the films to have an artistic value.
US mily launches investigation into FBI agents’ allegations
MIAMI, 6 Jan.—The US military’s southern command in Miami launched an investigation on Wednesday into FBI agents’ allegations that interrogators tortured prisoners at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base.

The military’s Southern Command, which jurisdictionally oversees the US base in eastern Cuba, ordered two officers to investigate the abuse allegations contained in FBI e-mails made public last month.

The FBI e-mails described Guantanamo prisoners being shackled hand and foot in a footcell position for 18 to 24 hours, and left to urinate and defecate on themselves.

One FBI agent reported seeing a barely conscious prisoner who had torn out his hair after being left overnight in a swirling room. Another alleged interogation in which a prisoner was wrapped in an Israeli flag and bombarded with loud music and strobe lights.

SouthCom officials said Army General and Navy Captain would travel to Guantanamo this week to begin investigating the allegations.

MNA/Reuters

Mandela’s only surviving son dies at 54
JHB, 7 Jan—Former South African president Nelson Mandela’s only surviving son Magatho, 54, has died, Highveld stereo radio news reported on Thursday.

Magatho had been in a critical condition in the Linksfield Hospital for the past few weeks, said Zindzi Mandela, Makgatho’s half-sister.

Magatho, an attorney, was admitted to hospital late in November. He was part of Standard Bank’s legal team and worked as a consultant for the group. He was Mandela’s eldest child and only surviving son from his first marriage to Evelyn Ntoko Mase who died some time ago. Last year Magatho Mandela’s wife Zondi died of pneumonia.

MNA/Xinhua

Humanoid robot NBP-1 reacts to Dr Yoo Bum-jae, a leader of a South Korean scientist team at the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) in Seoul in this photo taken on 6 Jan, 2005.—INTERNET

CLAIR CLAIMS DAY NOTICE “M.V. BAGO VOY: NO. (4)”

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V BAGO Voy: No (4) arrived on 8.1.05 are hereby notified that their cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMAR FIVE STAR LINE

Phone No: 295279,295280,295281,295658,295659

CLAIR CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V. OCEAN LEO VOY: NO. (55)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V OCEAN LEO Voy No (55) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 9.1.05 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of Myanmar Port Authority where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S EASTERN CAR LINER LTD, JAPAN

Phone No: 256924/256914

CLAIR CLAIMS DAY NOTICE M.V. SEA MERCHANT VOY: NO. (541)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V SEA MERCHANT Voy No (541) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 11.1.05 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of A.W.P.T where it will lie at the consignee’s risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm up to Claims Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

SHIPPING AGENCY DEPARTMENT MYANMA PORT AUTHORITY

AGENT FOR: M/S ADVANCE CONTAINER

Phone No: 256908/378316/376797

Don’t smoke
**Women who use HRT may increase risk of stroke**

**London, 7 Jan**—Women who use hormone replacement therapy (HRT) to relieve symptoms of the menopause are at increased risk of stroke, according to a review of 28 HRT trials.

Researchers at Nottingham University in England, who looked at the findings of trials involving nearly 40,000 women, said HRT was associated with an overall 29 per cent raised possibility of stroke. The results support previous studies that have suggested a link. “Hormone replacement therapy was associated with an increased risk of stroke,” said Philip Bath, a professor at the university.

“This systematic review supports the results of individual trials and previous reviews finding that hormone replacement therapy does not reduce the risk of stroke in post-menopausal women,” he added. HRT was associated with a raised risk of ischemic stroke, which is caused by an insufficient blood supply to the brain. The report, published online by the British Medical Journal, found that women who were taking the drug and suffered a stroke seemed to have a worse outcome.

“The severity of stroke was increased with hormone replacement therapy,” Bath added.

The researchers do not know why the drugs used in the trials, in which women were treated with oestrogen-only therapy or combined oestrogen and progesterone therapy, raised the risk of stroke.

Last year the National Institutes of Health in the United States stopped a trial of women taking hormone replacement therapy after they discovered the pills increased the stroke possibility. Swedish researchers also halted a study examining the impact of HRT in women with a history of breast cancer because of an unacceptably high risk of recurrence of the disease.

Millions of women have used HRT to relieve hot flushes, mood swings and sexual problems linked to the menopause and to stave off osteoporosis, or brittle bone disease. The Swedish decision followed moves by American and British scientists who also stopped trials after learning HRT may increase the risk of breast cancer, stroke and blood clots.

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**New York State University plans tuition hike**

**New York, 7 Jan**—State University of New York (SUNY) Chancellor Robert King proposed on Thursday a 600-US-dollar tuition hike for all students beginning in the fall. The tuition would increase for undergraduate state residents from the current 4,350 US dollars a year to 4,950 US dollars and stay at that level for those students of four years. The proposed tuition increase, pending approval by the legislature and governor, would raise 95 million US dollars for improving academic programs. It would also use state budget increases for the basic operation of SUNY, including instructors salaries and energy costs. King said the 600-US-dollar increase beginning in the fall was forced by energy costs and union contract raises.

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**Poles oppose transfer of US military bases to Poland**

**Warsaw, 6 Jan**—More than half of the Polish people oppose the transfer of large US military bases from Germany to Poland, an opinion poll issued Wednesday said.

According to the poll, 54 per cent of Poles are against the transfer of large US military bases to Poland and 50 per cent oppose establishing air bases for the deployment of US Air Force personnel.

They mainly fear that Poland may become the target of terrorist attacks. But some Poles are not against the establishment of small bases with special equipment, such as radar stations, because they believe such bases can help strengthen the security of Poland’s territorial space.

The United States plans to transfer part of its military forces in Germany to eastern Europe, which has caused great concerns in Poland.

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**Australian tortured for 6 months before transfer to Guantanamo**

**Washington, 7 Jan**—An Australian terror suspect says US authorities sent him to Egypt in late 2001 where he was tortured for six months before being transferred to the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, The Washington Post reported on Thursday, citing newly released court documents.

In a petition seeking to keep the United States from returning him to Egypt, Mamdouh Habib alleges that while under Egyptian detention he was hung by his arms from hooks, repeatedly shocked, nearly drowned and brutally beaten, the newspaper said.

The Egyptian-born Habib contends that US and international law prohibit sending him back in the petition filed in November in US District Court in Washington. It was made public on Wednesday after a judge ruled that it did not contain classified information, the Post said.

According to the newspaper, Habib’s case is only the second to describe the secret Central Intelligence Agency practice of “rendition” and the first to challenge the legality of the practice.

Under the practice, the CIA has turned over suspected terrorists to be interrogated in some countries that are known to torture prisoners, the newspaper said.

It was not clear which US agency transferred Habib to Egypt, The Washington Post said, adding that the US Justice Department had not addressed the allegation that he was sent there.

A Justice Department spokesman was not immediately available for comment.

Habib, a father of four, was arrested crossing from Pakistan into Afghanistan three weeks after the September 11, 2001, airliner attacks on the United States. He was detained as a suspected al-Qaeda trainer, the Post said.

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**South Korea’s Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) Co is set to deliver the world’s first vessel constructed on land instead of in a dry dock in what it claimed was a technical breakthrough. — Internet**
Valencia defender Pellegrino joins Liverpool

LONDON, 7 Jan — Liverpool have signed with Valencia defender Mauricio Pellegrino on a free transfer from the English Premier League club confirmed on Wednesday.

The Argentine international, 33, signed a six-month contract with the option of extending the deal for a further year after passing a medical at Anfield on Wednesday.

"At my age it's a great satisfaction that this opportunity comes along. I have always wanted to play in English football," said Pellegrino told the club's web site.

Pellegrino had been with Valencia for five years, helping them win two league titles and a UEFA Cup as well as make it through to Champions League final in 2000 and 2001.

Liverpool's current manager Rafael Benitez had been in charge at Valencia, and their Swiss international defender Stephan Henchoz is now expected to leave.

Brazil's Santos to sign Colombian goalkeeper Juan Henao

BOGOTA, 7 Jan — Goalkeeper Juan Henao will be transferred from Colombia's Once Caldas to Brazilian champions Santos, local radio station Caracol reported here on Thursday.

The report said that the goalie told local media that the switch would be "an important opportunity" to him.

Henao, 33, was one of the key players in Once Caldas' campaign to win the Liborators Cup 2004. He also helped win the Inter-Continental Cup as the Colombian side beat UEFA champions Porto of Portugal in the final.

United States’ title hopes fade in Hopman Cup tennis tourney

CANBERRA, 7 Jan — The United States' hopes of winning a third consecutive Hopman Cup tournament faded away on Thursday after they suffered a surprising defeat by Slovakia.

The tournament is being held in Burswood Dome, Western Australia.

Daniela Hantuchova beat Meghan Shaughnessy 6-4, 6-2 and Dominik Hrbaty held off James Blake 7-6, 6-4 to give the Slovaks an unassailable 2-0 lead. Slovakia lost to the Americans in last year's final.

With one win and one defeat from their respective Group B matches, the United States, Slovakia and the Netherlands can all qualify for Saturday's final.

The future of the group competitions was left open after the withdrawal of Mark Philippoussis because of an adductor injury. It crushed Australia's chance of qualifying. World number 324 Paul Baccanello will replace Philippoussis but Australia's results in their final match against the United States will not help themselves, but the Americans.

Hantuchova, now ranked 31st in the world, produced a confident performance to see off Shaughnessy. Hrbaty, who beat Philippoussis in his opening match on Monday, then fought off a tough challenge from Blake to give the Slovaks an upset win.

Later on Thursday, Group A sees action between Argentina and Germany to decide the group winner.

Russia and Italy, both already eliminated from the event, play each other in the other group game.

Maradona returns to Cuba for treatment after Christmas break

BUENOS AIRES, 7 Jan — Former Argentine national soccer team captain Diego Maradona returned to Cuba to resume treatment for his drug addiction after taking a month-long Christmas break with his family in Argentina.

"He went this morning," said Maradona's lawyer Roberto Damboriana. "He's going to resume his treatment and study some offers he's received from Spanish television."

Maradona has been undergoing treatment for his addiction to cocaine since September. Last April the soccer great spent 10 days in the intensive care unit of a Buenos Aires hospital with heart and breathing problems.

Philippines trying to include 18 sports in next SEA Games

MANILA, 7 Jan— The Philippines may have already lost 99 gold medals in the 11th Southeast Asian Games even before it starts in November 2005, according to a study released Thursday.

The study by the Philippine Olympic Committee showed that there are 18 sports, accounting for 99 gold medals in the current SEA Games calendar, have not been included in the next Games due to a lack of fund.

Go Teng Kok, head of the committee, told Philippine Daily Inquirer that they are looking for areas where the country can save money and at the same time boost its chances for the overall championship.

"Imagine the total of gold medals we are likely to give away to our opponents," said Go. "It would be a double-edged process because we can slash a big chunk of the SEA Games budget while we strengthen our chances for the overall championships."

"We understand the rules that the list of events must be finalized one year before the Games, but this is a different situation altogether because the host country is in dire need of funds," said Go.

Former Philippine Sports Commission Richie Garcia and Red Dumuk also noted that at least three member countries have made appeals for revisions, particularly Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, well after the deadline expired.

These countries wanted to increase the number of wushu events from 18 to 24 and increase those of muay thai from four to six, they said.

The 18 sports under question are baseball, muay thai, triathlon, rowing, sepak takraw, pencak silat, traditional boat race, volleyball, weightlifting, body building, table tennis, squash, badminton, lawn tennis, sailing, canoe-kayak, petanque and lawn bowls.

Lazio crush AS Roma 3-1

ROME, 7 Jan — Lazio striker Paolo Di Canio made a fairytale return to the Rome derby when he scored one goal and set up another in a 3-1 win over rivals AS Roma on Thursday.

The result ended a run of 10 derbies without success for Lazio and lifted them to 12th place in Serie A on 20 points, three fewer than eighth-placed Roma.

"I didn't think it would be this great. I didn't believe we could control the match in that way," said Di Canio.

"I was worried but my team mates kept me calm. With this shirt on, you don't need to be frightened of anything. It's a double pleasure, because people kept telling me: 'You're old, you won't be able to stay on your feet.'"

The 36-year-old, who took a 75 percent pay cut to return to the club he supported as a boy in the close season, put Lazio ahead just before the half- hour mark.

But Roma equalized midway through the second period when poor defending allowed Antonio Cassano to nod home a Panucci cross at the near post.

Lazio were soon back in front, however, as Di Canio chipped a loose ball out of Roma's area to winger Cesar and the Brazilian rifled a low shot into the bottom corner of the net.

Striker Tommaso Rocchi bagged Lazio's third five minutes from time when he broke the offside trap, rounded the goalkeeper and steered the ball home.

Di Canio, who played for Lazio for two seasons between 1988 and 1990, had troubled Roma's defence early on when he curled a dangerous cross to the far post that Panucci did well to cut out before it reached Cesar.

But the striker, who left English Premier League club Charlton Athletic to return to Rome, soon put his team in front when he sprinted between defenders Philippe Mexes and Christian Panucci to volley Fabio Liverani's long ball into the net.

Roma struggled to find their rhythm and their best effort before the break came when midfielder Simone Perrotta headed weakly at goalkeeper Angelo Peruzzi. Roma came out in more determined mood after the interval. Lazio's defence fended off a couple of half-chances but were nowhere to be seen when Cassano headed home after 69 minutes.

Five minutes later, however, Lazio regained the lead through Cesar before Rocchi bagged their third in the 85th minute to wrap up their first derby victory since March 2000 when goals by Pavel Nedved and Juan Sebastian Veron gave them a 2-1 win. — MNA/Reuters
China, Botswana exchange greetings on anniversary of dip.ties

BEIJING, 7 Jan — Presidents of China and Botswana exchanged congratulatory messages on Thursday on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

China and Botswana enjoy long-term friendship, and relations between the two countries have developed smoothly and understanding between the two peoples has increasingly deepened in the past three decades, said Chinese President Hu Jintao.

The two countries have cooperated fruitfully in trade, culture, education, health and other fields, and supported each other in international affairs, said Hu.

The Chinese Government and the Chinese people treasure their traditional friendship with Botswana and will join hands with the Botswana Government and people to bring their cooperation to a new height, Hu added.

Botswana President Festus Mogae said that friendship between Botswana and China has a solid base and bilateral exchanges at various levels have helped further enhance the mutually-beneficial cooperation between the two peoples.

Mogae thanked China for its long-time support to Botswana’s development, and reiterated support for “One China Policy” and Taiwan’s early return to its motherland — MNA/Xinhua

S Korea’s “IT” exports rise 29% in 2004

SEOUL, 7 Jan — South Korea’s exports of information-technology goods rocketed 29 per cent to 74.34 billion US dollars in 2004, said South Korean Ministry of Information and Communication (MIC) on Thursday.

The growth rate of IT exports of 2004 is the fastest one in the recent five years, the ministry said in a news advisory on its website.

IT exports accounts nearly 30 per cent of South Korea’s overall exports in 2004 last year. South Korea’s exports in 2004 were 254.22 billion dollars, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

In 2004, semiconductor and other chip-related products continued to lead South Korea’s IT exports higher, rising 30.6 per cent to 33.8 billion dollars.

India, Japan to step up economic diplomacy

NEW DELHI, 7 Jan — India and Japan are going to step up economic diplomacy in 2005, the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS) reported on Thursday.

Three Japanese ministers are set to visit New Delhi in January, which will be followed by the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi sometime in the year, IANS quoted Japanese Ambassador Yasuaki Enoki as saying.

Shoichi Nakagawa, Japan’s Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Sadakazu Tantaki, the Minister of Finance, and Heizo Takenaka, the Minister for Economic and Fiscal policy, will visit New Delhi this month.

The bilateral trade between India and Japan was estimated to be 4.5 billion US dollars in 2004.

“Although trade balance in January, which will be followed by the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi sometime in the year, IANS quoted Japanese Ambassador Yasuaki Enoki as saying.

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“Although trade balance...” — MNA/Xinhua

Earthquake report

(Lossed at 0910 hours MST on today)

An earthquake of slight intensity (4.7) Richter Scale with its epicenter inside of Yangon about (240) miles North of Mandalay seismological observatory was recorded at (20) hrs (51) min (26) sec MST on 6 Jan 2005.

MNA/Xinhua

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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

YANGON, 7 Jan — The graduation dinner of the 2nd Intake of Defence Services Institute of Nursing and Paramedical Science was held at the Convocation Hall of Defence Services Medical Academy, here, this evening, attended by Vice-Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Maung Aye and wife Daw Mya Mya San. Also present at the dinner were Member of the State Peace and Development Council General Thura Shwe Mann of the Ministry of Defence and wife, Prime Minister Lt-Gen Soe Win and wife, Secretary-1 of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Thein Sein and wife, Members of the State Peace and Development Council Lt-Gen Ye Myint, Lt-Gen Aung Htwe, Lt-Gen Khin Maung Than, Lt-Gen Maung Bo, Quartermaster-General Lt-Gen Thitha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Chief of Armed Forces Training Lt-Gen Kyaw Win and Lt-Gen Tin Aye of the Ministry of Defence, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Vice-Admiral Soe Thein and Commander-in-Chief (Air) Lt-Gen Myat Hein and their wives, Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe and wife, ministers, the Yangon Mayor, deputy ministers, senior military officers of Mingaladon Station, departmental heads, Rectors of the Institute Brig-Gen Aung Khin Soe and DSMA, advisers, faculty members, trainees and their relatives and parents. After the dinner, artists of Myawady music troupe and Myanmar Music Asiayon and Myawady Anyeint troupe entertained those present with dances and songs to the accompaniment of Myawady music troupe.

Myanma Cooperatives Centenary Commemorative Products Show and Festival commence

YANGON, 7 Jan — The Myanma Cooperatives Centenary Commemorative Products Show and Festival were opened at Cooperative Commercial Centre (Saya San Plaza) at the corner of Saya San Road and University Avenue, here, this morning. Minister for Cooperatives Col Zaw Min unveiled the signboard of the festival. Also present on the occasion were Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha, Minister for Commerce Brig-Gen Tin Naing Thein, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office U Than Shwe, Chief Justice U Aung Toe, Attorney-General U Aye Maung, Chairman of Civil Service Selection and Training Board Dr Than Nyun, Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, diplomats and officials, departmental officials and (See page 10)