Comrades,

Today is the graduation day of the 11th Intake of the Defence Services Technological Academy. Since you will soon have to enter the practical field of your profession and discharge your duties as junior leaders of military engineers, I would like to impart to you what you should know in all seriousness.

Comrades, Since you are military personnel having been trained and nurtured to become brilliant engineering officers, you will have to discharge your primary duty of defending the nation. As you all have already studied the military science and technology and have undergone military training as a platoon commander, for the sake of national security and defense, you are to dauntlessly discharge your duties in a battlefield when required, in maneuvering as infantry unit. In our Tatmadaw history, evidences show that there are instances in which battles were fought and won exclusively by Engineering Corps without infantry units. It is a fine tradition of our Tatmadaw which possesses the qualities of a good tough soldier. Therefore, you, being gallant and having the characteristics of a good soldier must preserve this noble tradition at risk to your life. Moreover, to discharge your assigned duties successfully, every unit and every soldier should possess the Five Basic Qualities and Three Forevers.

Comrades, Being young leaders of the Tatmadaw, you must lead your troops through correct leadership. To take command of your troops in accordance with leadership characteristics, you must possess the three capabilities, namely, military capabilities, persuasive capabilities and administrative capabilities. Moreover, as you are all technocrats, you must take the leading role in the technological field. With regard to morale and discipline, (See page 8)

With the rapid advancement and progress in science and technology in the world today, we need a modern Tatmadaw for the total defence of the nation.
Towards perpetual existence of self-reliant rural libraries

In its efforts to bring about rural development the government is fulfilling the requirements in economic, education, health and social sectors.

In that regard, more school buildings, affiliated basic education high schools, station hospitals, medical wards and rural health care centres are being opened in rural regions. As a result, more rural people have access to education and health care.

Likewise, altogether over 50,000 self-reliant libraries have been opened in villages of different regions in order to broaden the horizons of rural people.

The emergence of self-reliant libraries in rural regions helps the people cultivate the reading habit. This will also help those with reading habit and adult neo-literates continue studying different kinds of publications and further foster their reading habit.

In the meantime, continued efforts are to be made for perpetual existence and development of the already opened self-reliant libraries. And concerted and well-coordinated efforts need to be made for all the self-reliant rural libraries to be complete with own buildings, furniture, publications and librarians.

As the emergence of more libraries helps inculcate rural people with education and knowledge, it is incumbent upon local authorities, social organizations, well-wishers and local people to try their utmost for perpetual existence and development of the self-reliant rural libraries.

Golf Championship in Myitkyina 2-5 Jan

YANGON, 19 Dec—The Golf Championship, jointly organized by the Myanmar Golf Federation and the Myanmar PGA, will be held at Northern Star Golf Club in Myitkyina from 2 to 5 January 2009.

Professional golfers and the amateur golfers (handicap 0-12) may take part in the championship. Altogether four golfers of the team are to participate in the team scratch event. One golfer must have handicap 0-12 and the remaining three players, handicap 0-18.

The senior division for the golfers of above 55 years old and the remaining three players, handicap 0-18.

Altogether four golfers of the team are to participate in the Myanmar PGA, will be held at Northern Star Golf Club in Myitkyina from 2 to 5 January 2009.

The hole-in-one scorers will be awarded deservingly.

The championship will be organized in 2009. The senior division for the golfers of above 55 years old and the remaining three players, handicap 0-18.

As the emergence of more libraries helps inculcate rural people with education and knowledge, it is incumbent upon local authorities, social organizations, well-wishers and local people to try their utmost for perpetual existence and development of the self-reliant rural libraries.

Vocational training courses opened

YANGON, 18 Dec — The basic vocational training course No. 50 and tailoring course No. 25 of the vocational training school of the Education and Training Department of the Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs were opened at the school in Kengtung Township on 15 December.

Chairman of Shan State (East) Peace and Development Council Commander Brig-Gen Kyaw Phyo made an address. A total of 30 trainees are taking the course.

Hakha Township’s vocational training school opened women’s basic vocational training course No. 39 and tailoring course No. 22 at the training school, with address by Chairman of Chin State Peace and Development Council Brig-Gen Hon Ngai. Altogether 28 trainees are participating in the course.

Similarly, vocational training courses were opened in Lashio, Muse in Shan State (North) and Yachilek and Monghsat in Shan State (East), Falam, Tiddiam, Mindat, Matupi and Kanpetlet in Chin State, Yinmarbin, Pale, Salinugi in Sagaing and Lashe, Lahel, Nanyon in Naga.

Minister U Soe Tha inspects building of village-to-village road and dredging of ditches in Twantay Township

YANGON, 19 Dec — Minister for National Planning and Economic Development U Soe Tha inspected construction of earth road linking Padan Yaykyaw village and Khatiya village and building of ditches at the northern part of Twantay on 15 December.

Next, the minister made an arrangement for use of public telephones at 13 villages in the township and met with local people at Pyawbwe village in the Township.

In meeting with townsenders, teachers and members of social organizations, the minister heard reports and attended to the needs.

Next, the minister also met with local people at KHALOKE village and SHANUSSY village.

On 16 December, the minister looked into the chosen site for construction of dispensary at Hsukaluk Yaykyaw village and met with local people at Atwin Yaykyaw village and Basic Education High School (Branch), in Kayin Chauk model village in the township. He also inspected fish breeding in Toe river at Twantawy village and pottery at Obo ward in Twantay.

NPED Minister performs regional development tasks in Twantay Township

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Concrete laying tasks finalized at Yeywa hydropower project

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—A ceremony to finalize concrete laying tasks of Yeywa hydropower project that is being implemented by No. 2 Construction Group of Hydropower Implementation Department of the Ministry of Electric Power No. 1 was held at the project on 15 December.

It was attended by Deputy Minister for Electric Power No. 1 U Myo Myint and heads of department under the ministry, Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Guan Mu and members, responsible persons of the companies and guests.

The deputy minister and party inspected progress in laying concrete of RCC main dam and then supervised to finalize concrete laying tasks by means of 2.5 ton Vibrating Roller.

Yeywa hydropower project is 2264 feet long and 433 feet high and it will generate 790 megawatt upon completion. It is RCC type concrete dam that is first being built in Myanmar and stands at ninth position on the fastest chart of RCC concrete laying. — MNA
Dutch soldier killed in Afghanistan

KABUL, 19 Dec — A Dutch soldier was killed Friday in southern Afghanistan, the NATO command confirmed. The soldier died in an improved explosive device strike, according to a news release from NATO’s International Security Assistance Force. “Our sincere condolences and sympathies are with the family and friends of this brave soldier, especially during this holiday season,” said ISAF spokesman Capt Mark Windsor Royal Navy.

Missiles fired from Gaza as truce ends

JERUSALEM, 19 Dec — The Israeli military will respond to missile firings from Gaza with airstrikes now that a cease-fire expired, officials said Friday. The expiration of the six-month truce between Hamas and Israel was followed by militants in Gaza firing three missiles into Israel and engaging in sniper fire, reported Debralife.com, a military intelligence Web site based in Jerusalem. Shortly after the cease-fire ended, an Israeli army spokesman said, “Quiet will be met by quiet but we will not hesitate to respond to missile offensives.” Defence officials said Israel would continue air strikes against missile cells and Hamas installations rather than engage in a large-scale military operation at this time.

Last S Korean troops leave Iraq

SEOUL, 19 Dec — South Korea has withdrawn the last of its troops from Iraq, ending what was once the third-largest mission there, after the US and UK deployments. About 600 soldiers were greeted in Seoul after leaving their base near Irbil, in the north of Iraq. South Korea sent about 3,600 soldiers to Iraq in 2004 but later scaled back the force due to public opposition. A number of countries have withdrawn from Iraq recently as a UN mandate authorising their presence expires. The troops “have successfully accomplished their four-year and three-month long mission and have come back to Seoul,” the South Korean military command said in a statement. South Korea had originally sent troops at the request of its major ally, the United States. They were engaged mostly in construction work in the north of Iraq, in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

US military’s Iraq withdrawal plan differs from Obama’s promise

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec — The US military has drafted an initial plan to pull troops out of Iraq, which somehow differs from the promise of President-elect Barack Obama on the issue, the Pentagon said Thursday. Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell told reporters the military briefed Obama and his national security team on the plan during a recent meeting. The military’s ‘plan proposes removing all US combat troops from Iraq’s urban areas in 2009, and all American troops from Iraq by 2011, in keeping with the recent Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), signed by the incumbent President George W Bush. However, the plan will make the withdrawal at a slower pace than Obama promised during the campaign, when he called for all combat troops to be out within 16 months — by the summer of 2010. Officials said Obama might seek to speed up the troop withdrawal once he was inaugurated. Reuters reported that the United States has some 143,000 troops in Iraq. The Associated Press put the number at around 150,000.

Iraqi official says leader of women’s group killed

SULAMANIYAH, 19 Dec — Iraqi police say attackers have decapitated the leader of the women’s league of the Kurdish Communist Party. A police officer says gunmen on Thursday stormed the Kirkuk home of Nahla Hussein al-Shaly and shot and beheaded her. The city of Kirkuk lies 180 miles north of Baghdad. The officer who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media. Party spokesman Azad Gahareeb says the 37-year-old al-Shaly may have been targeted because she promoted women’s rights. He says the married mother of two was alone in the house when she was attacked.
A police officer throws a bag of cocaine into an incinerator at a police base in Lima, Peru on 18 Dec, 2008. Police say they destroyed more than 4,000 kilograms (8,818 pounds) of drugs seized in 2008, including cocaine, marijuana and heroin. — Internet

Pentagon chief orders plan to shut down Guantanamo

WASHINGTON, 19 Dec—The US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has ordered his staff to prepare a plan to shut down the prison at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Pentagon said Thursday.

Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said Gates’ instructions are based on President-elect Barack Obama’s declaration that closing Guantanamo is a priority.

Obama has asked Gates, who took office two years ago, to remain on his post.

TV broadcaster vehicles are parked in front of the Bank of Japan headquar ters in Tokyo on 19 Dec, 2008. The central bank is weighing worries about a global downturn as its policy board ends a two-day meeting to decide on a benchmark interest rate on Friday. — Internet

Democrat’s budget plan to be vetoed

SACRAMENTO, 19 Dec—Democratic lawmakers on Thursday pushed through an $18 billion package to reduce California’s burgeoning budget deficit, but Gov Arnold Schwarzenegger said he would veto it because it didn’t meet his demands for an economic recovery plan.

Schwarzenegger said California will continue on a path toward “fiscal Armageddon” since Democrats sent him a “terrible budget” that didn’t make deep enough cuts or include the kind of stimulus he wanted to boost the state’s ailing economy. California’s deficit is expected to hit $42 billion in the next 18 months.

“This package that they are sending down does really only do one thing, and this is punish the people of California,” he said at a news conference shortly after the vote.

But Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, D-Los Ange les, said the Democratic package included economic stimulus provisions and other measures that should have satisfied the Republican governor.

“I am frankly surprised how willing Gov Schwarzenegger is to push California over a cliff when he clearly is not fully aware of what the bills we passed today do,” Bass said. “The governor claims he wants to negotiate and then says things must be exactly as he wants. That is astonishing given the crisis we face.” Lawmakers adjourned for the holidays, even as the governor called on them to solve the problem before Christmas. He did not say when he would call them back into session. — Internet

Bolivia: Expel all US ambassadors

COSTA DO SAUIPE, 19 Dec—Latin American nations should expel US ambassadors until the United States lifts its embargo on Cuba, Bolivian President Evo Morales said Wednesday. But his remarks found little support from other regional leaders.

Morales made the demand during a summit of Latin American and Caribbean leaders in this beach resort in northeastern Brazil.

“I want to make a proposal that many are not going to like: Set a time limit for the new US government to lift the economic blockade” against Cuba, Morales said, using the tough term for US sanctions that Cuba and its allies use.

“If the new government doesn’t lift the economic blockade, we are going to lift our ambassadors,” said Morales, who expelled the US ambassador to Bolivia in September over a different issue, accusing him of siding with violent opposition protesters.

The Bolivian president’s demand did not receive much support from other leaders, many of whom have expressed hope that President-elect Barack Obama will have a friendlier approach to the left-leaning governments that now hold power in many Latin American nations.

The summit’s host, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said the region should wait to see what policies the new US administration will follow. — Internet

Yemen kidnappers demand release of cleric in US

SAN’A, 19 Dec—Kidnappers holding three Germans in Yemen are demanding the release of a cleric jailed in the United States on terrorism charges, tribal mediators said Thursday.

The mediators said the kidnappers’ leader, Sheikh Abed Rabbo Saleh al-Tam, told them he wants the release of Sheikh Mohammed Ali Hassan al-Moayad.

Al-Moayad was sentenced in 2005 in New York to 75 years in prison for supporting terrorism. In October, an appeals court overturned his conviction and ordered a retrial because of inflammatory testimony about unrelated terrorism cases in his first trial. — Internet

Brazil to boost troops in Amazon, weapons industry

BRASILIA, 19 Dec—Brazil will beef up troops in its vast Amazon rain forest, build nuclear and conventional submarines to protect offshore oil fields and modernize its weapons industry under a national defence plan outlined in a report Thursday.

Strategic Affairs Minister Roberto Mangabeira Unger said the plan calls for investments to modernize and equip the armed forces, create a rapid deployment force and update its weapons industry. Officials did not provide a cost estimate.

“The plan includes the restructuring of Brazil’s weapons industry to guarantee the supply of defence material without depending on foreign suppliers, President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said at a ceremony to unveil the plan.

Defence Minister Nelson Jobim said the government will increase the number of troops in the Amazon from 17,000 to 25,000, though he did not offer a timetable.

The report says Brazil “will develop its capacity to design and manufacture conventional and nuclear submarines” to protect its coastline, as well as recently discovered offshore oil reserves that could hold up to 55 billion barrels of oil.

“Investments will be accelerated and partnerships established to execute the nuclear submarine project,” the report said. — Internet

Members of a kidnappers gang are shown to the media with their sized guns after being arrested by Mexican Army in Tijuana, Mexico, on 18 Dec, 2008. Mexican Army liberated three kidnapped men and arrested eleven gang members after an operation on 17 Dec, 2008. — Internet
Nicaragua, Russia sign cooperation agreements

MANAGUA, 19 Dec—Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said Thursday that his government would help push forward technical revolution.

The agreements cover areas such as agriculture, fishing, space research for peaceful uses, telecommunications and energy.

The two sides also agreed to cooperate in the field of education. President Medvedev said about 5,000 Nicaraguan students have so far graduated from Russian universities and institutions.

Calling Nicaragua a key and strategic partner of Russia in Latin America, Medvedev stressed Russia’s willingness to boost bilateral economic cooperation and trade, which is practically nil the moment.

In a joint statement, both presidents made a call to stand up against external pressures against Nicaragua.

The United States has threatened to cancel aid to Nicaragua over alleged election fraud during the November municipal elections.—Xinhua

DPRK top leader calls for pushing forward technical revolution

PYONGYANG, 19 Dec—Kim Jong Il, top leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), has called for pushing forward the technical revolution throughout the country, state media said Friday.

He called on all the sectors of the national economy to realize modernization based on the latest scientific and technological achievements, the state media reported. Kim made the statement during a visit to the February General Steel Enterprise, a machine plant in the northern province of Jagang, the state media added.—Xinhua

Chinese Premier promises support to Hong Kong, Macao amid global financial crisis

BEIJING, 19 Dec—Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao said Friday that the central government will “take measures” to ensure Hong Kong and Macao’s financial stability and economic development amid the global financial crisis.

The central government would help Hong Kong overcome challenges brought by the world financial crisis by promoting financial cooperation between the mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), he said.

The central government would help Hong Kong upgrade infrastructure construction and grant favorable policies for small and medium-sized HK enterprises, Wen said during a meeting with Donald Tsang, Chief Executive of HKSAR.

The mainland would also ensure stable food and natural resources supply for the region and further open its service industry market to HKSAR, he said.—Xinhua

Strong earthquake shakes Chile

SANTIAGO, 19 Dec—A 6.3 Richter degrees earthquake shook on Thursday Chile’s coast near the city of Valparaiso, 148 kilometre away from Santiago, without damages reported, Chilean Emergency Bureau said.

The US Geological Survey (USGS) said that earthquake struck at 6:19 pm local time (2119 GMT), 70 kilometres north to Valparaiso, with a depth of 35 kilometres.

Head of the Chilean Emergency Office (ONEMI) Carmen Fernandez said that “there are not reports of damages due to the quake. It’s part of a normal seismic activity.”—Xinhua

All items from Xinhua News Agency

A cameraman films the remains of rockets that landed in Sderot at the police station in Sderot, southern Israel, on 18 Dec, 2008. —Xinhua

Sailors defend pirates' attacks on the deck of the Chinese ship “Zhenhua 4” in the Gulf of Aden, on 17 Dec, 2008. The Chinese ship escaped pirate hijack in the Gulf of Aden on Wednesday, after the crew fought for four hours with the help of a multi-coalition force. No injuries or deaths were reported. Nine pirates armed with rocket launchers and heavy machine guns boarded the ship. The 30 crew members locked themselves in their accommodation area, using fire hydrants and firebombs to prevent the attackers from entering, said an official with China Maritime Search and Rescue Center (CMSRC).—Xinhua

Rescue workers sift through the wreckage after a light aircraft slammed into a suburban house in Sydney on 18 Dec. Two women were killed when two flying school planes collided, officials have said.—Xinhua

Olmert says peace deal between Israel, Syria feasible

TEL AVIV, 19 Dec—Outgoing Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Thursday evening that it was possible to negotiate a peace deal between Israel and Syria, days ahead of his visit to mediator Turkey to advance the indirect peace talks. “A peace treaty between Israel and Syria is feasible,” said Olmert at a conference of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University.

“Syria does not necessarily want to be part of the axis of evil,” he said. “Syria wants to reconnect with the West and the United States. Removing Syria from the axis of evil is an Israeli interest.”

An Israeli-Syrian peace deal will bring “substantial advantages” to the Jewish state, said the prime minister. “A peace treaty would lower the possibility of war, break the strategic ties between Damascus and Tehran, lead to the expulsion of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas headquarters from Syria and would stop the cash flow to Hezbollah,” said Olmert.

The prime minister stressed that though he could not guarantee success of a peace process with Syria, it was important to try. “How will we know if we don’t try? How can we try if we are not prepared to take any risks?” he asked.

On the indirect Israeli-Syrian peace talks mediated by Turkey, Olmert said that the talks were important and could lead to direct negotiations.

The Turkey-brokered indirect talks with Syria are pivotal. They have proven that real negotiations are doable,” said the prime minister.—Xinhua

Nicaragua, Russia over alleged election fraud during the
pressures against Nicaragua.

Among other things, to stand up against external
trade, which is practically nil at the moment.

Russia in Latin America, Medvedev stressed Russia’s
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Nicaraguan students have so far graduated from Russian
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among other things, to stand up against external
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November municipal elections.—Xinhua
Worm infestation, and Maternal and Child Health

Professor Dr. Paing Soe

Helminthes or worm infestation refers to worms that live as parasites in the human body and are a fundamental cause of disease associated with health and nutrition problems beyond gastrointestinal tract disturbances. These parasites consume nutrients from children they infect, thus retarding their physical development. They destroy tissues and organs, cause abdominal pain, diarrhea, intestinal obstruction, anemia, ulcers and other health problems. Heavy or long-term intestinal worm infection frequently results in death if treatment is not given in time. All of these consequences of infection can slow cognitive development and thus impair learning in these children. Globally, one-third of population is infected with intestinal worms, of which 2 billion are unknowingly facing the adverse effects of worm infestation. Among those infected, 1.47 billion are due to roundworm, 1.3 billion people due to hookworm and 1.05 billion due to whipworm. Hundreds of millions of people do not enjoy a healthy, productive life because they are debilitated and unable to achieve their full potential. Parasitic infections contribute significantly to this widespread deprivation. Parasitic infections are the hallmark of poverty and undermine development. Soil-transmitted worms infestation due to roundworm, whipworm and hookworm and water-transmitted Schistosoma occur all over the world. Pregnant women and school children aged 5-14 years suffer the highest infection rate and worm burden that attributes to poor sanitation and hygiene. About 400 million school-age children are infected with roundworm, whipworm and hookworm worldwide. 

According to a study conducted in Thailand in 1996, common helminthes were hookworm (21.6%), whipworm (3.9%) and roundworm (1.9%). In Vietnam, a nationwide estimation on roundworm infection is about 60 million and hookworm about 40 million in 2000. In one study conducted in Cambodia at 1997 showed that children were mostly infected by soil-transmitted worms. 

Worm and maternal health

Anemia is one of the main underlying causes of poor pregnancy outcomes in the developing world and is caused by general nutritional deficiencies and worm infestation. In developing countries, 75% of pregnant mothers are suffering from moderate to severe anemia. Women and adolescent girls bear a particular burden of losing blood due to hookworm infestations resulting in iron deficiency anemia. Heavy infestation with hookworm causes anemia among women, which is believed to be one of the factors contributing to maternal morbidity and mortality. In anemic women, the risk of dying during pregnancy or childbirth is about 3.5 times higher than in non-anemic women. A recent study conducted in Nepal showed that de-worming pregnant women could bring about much more advantage than expected. That study was conducted by John Hopkins’ Bloomberg School of Public Health and found that 74 percent of pregnant women in Nepal were infected with hookworm and that 54 percent had moderate to severe anemia because of the worm. Most of the women in the study were given one pill of the drug albendazole in both the second and third trimester of pregnancy at (5% and 8% of pregnancy). When researchers checked on infants at six months, they found 14% fewer deaths among infants of mothers given one dose of the drug and 41% fewer deaths of children whose mothers were given two doses. 

Since anemia reduces resistance to blood loss, death may occur from bleeding associated with normal delivery. Association of anemia with worm infestation which can lead to adverse maternal outcome such as puperal sepsis, antepartum hemorrhage, postpartum hemorrhage and maternal mortality is no longer a debatable issue. Presence of parasitic infestation and its relationship with anemia and fatal outcomes was also studied by Stratton and associates in the United States. They found that, there was a significant three-fold increase in the incidence of neonatal hyperbilirubinemia in mothers that had heavy presence of helminthes in the stool. Hook worm and ascaristasis were the main causal parasites of anemia.

Worm and child health

Estimates have been made of the quantitative costs of worm infestations to cognition and education by WHO. The total lost years of schooling due to worm-associated absenteeism amounts to over 200 million years; with almost all this loss occurring in developing countries. The average IQ loss per worm infection is 3.75 points. Feeding a child infected with worms is like filling a leaking bucket with water and such children always suffered from nutritional deficiencies. Worm infection weakens very young children in ways that increase their vulnerability to infectious diseases. One recent study indicated that worm infestations disrupt the immune response in ways that could hasten the progression from HIV infection to AIDS. Anemia caused by worm infestation worsens malaria. Recent studies conducted in areas where malaria is a major childhood killer showed that deworming and the resulting reductions in anemia improve the chances of surviving severe malaria. Deworming school children by anthelmintic drug treatment is a curative approach for expelling the heavy worm load. Deworming increases attendance at school not only because they are free from illness but also because their cognitive performance improves and they learn significantly better.

Treatment and Prevention

Anthelmintic treatment is recommended for all risk groups, adolescent girls, pregnant mothers, school-aged children and also recommended for children as young as 12 months because it improves their health. By reducing anemia, deworming drugs which can be safely administered during pregnancy, contribute directly to maternal survival. Abundant evidence shows that regular deworming reduces anemia in adolescent girls and women of childbearing age, thus preparing them for a healthier pregnancy. Deworming drugs should be taken 6 monthly (2 Times a year). However, drug therapy alone is only a short-term measure of reducing worm infection and re-infestation is frequent. Control measures through improved sanitation, hygiene and deworming are needed to prevent infection and re-infection.

A national survey performed in school-age children of Cambodia, dewormed using Mebendazole 500 mg indicated intestinal worms dropped to about one-third of the initial level, but re-infection occurs frequently because of a lack of access to adequate sanitation, safe water and unhygienic habits. A children’s deworming programme has proven to be an effective entry point and educational tool to create the demand for household sanitation latrines, for use of safe water and improved hygiene behavior change in communities

Based on some project experiences. One successful pilot project was implemented in ten villages in West Bengal, India, to promote a package that consisted of deworming young children, hygiene education, improved sanitation by building family toilets, and chlorination of drinking water at house level by housewives. On seeing worms coming out from their children’s bodies, parents were convinced of the need for a clean environment, for the use of sanitary toilets and for hand washing with soap. An 80% reduction of childhood diarrhea was achieved within 12 months of intervention and many households had built and used simple sanitary toilets.

The project proved that hygiene education alone would not lead to behavior change unless strengthened by the availability of safe drinking water and sanitary facilities in an enabling environment. UNICEF has supported many governments in this (and other) regions to assist in the provision of water supply and sanitary facilities and intensive hygiene education in many schools through the Water, Environment and Sanitation (WES) programme. The UNICEF supported school sanitation and hygiene education (SSHE) programme, and other programmes that could effectively enhance behavior change in children to break the routes of worm transmission and other waterborne diseases.

Implementation of any helmint control programme at country level requires strong links with existing interventions that are already in place to reach women and children, e.g., deworming may hitch a lift from health care programme like immunization, vitamin A supplements, antenatal care. This intervention has been successful in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and in several other countries. Today, control of these infections can be achieved through regular treatment with inexpensive, single-dose and highly effective drugs, so safe they can be given to all groups at risk.

Deworming improves not only health and development of individual but also development of the nation. Deworming is a particularly effective intervention because the capacity costs are negligible. It is an investment for future health and development and the small investment that can give a large profit. Periodic administration of anthelmintic tablets to school-age children is now part of the policy of many well-designed school health programmes in endemic countries. This intervention is expanding all over the world towards the 75% global coverage target. WHO’s target is regular treatment of at least 75% of all school-age children at risk of morbidity for schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminth infections by 2010. There is evidence that anthelmintic treatment of women during pregnancy improves maternal health, increases birth weight and reduces infant mortality. Benefits for participating communities include increases in growth rates of children, better school attendance and performance, improved iron status, decline in anemia rates, healthier pregnancies and birth outcomes, and greater adult productivity leading to development of the nation. Therefore, let’s promote maternal and child health by deworming with safe, effective and inexpensive anthelmintic drugs and by improving personal hygiene.

(see page 7)
**Three lion cubs born**

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec — A female lion named Lonmei gave births to three baby lions in Zoological Gardens (Nay Pyi Taw) 7.22 p.m. yesterday. Her pregnancy period was 114 days.

The female lion arrived from Germany in Zoological Gardens (Nay Pyi Taw) 17 August 2006. The mother lion has been at the Zoological Gardens (Nay Pyi Taw) since its opening.

**Donation for storm victims**

YANGON, 19 Dec— Rice donation ceremony to the victims of three villages in Bogale and Labutta Townships of Ayeyawady Division, funded by Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery of Japan and jointly organized by Settlement and Land Record Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation and East Asia Emergency Rice Reserve (EAERR), was held at Basic Education Primary School of Kyinechaunggyi model village in Bogale Township on 18 December.

At the ceremony, Director-General U Win Kyi of the department delivered a speech. After that, general manager Dr Mulyo Siddy of EAERR explained facts about the donation. Afterwards, Dr Mulyo Siddy donated rice to Kyinechaunggyi village-tract, the director-general to Dhiniseik village-tract and Chairman of Pyapon District Peace and Development Council to Tebinke village-tract.

A total of 164 metric tons was donated to 13,120 storm victims in Bogale and Labutta Townships.

**Worm infestation, and Maternal health**

(from page 6)

**Benefits of deworming towards maternal and child health**

- Anemia associated with worm infestation can lead to adverse maternal outcome such as puperal sepsis, ante partum hemorrhage, postpartum hemorrhage and maternal mortality.
- There is a three-fold increase in the incidence of significant neonatal hyperbilirubinemia in the mothers that had the presence of helmintes in the stools.
- Deworming promotes maternal health and decreases maternal mortality and infant mortality rate.
- A child free from worm infections and lack of nutritional deficiencies has good immunity and cognitive performance with less school absenteeism.
- Worm infected child may suffer from the average IQ loss of 3.75 points than a normal, healthy child.
- Worm infections disrupt the immune response in ways that could hasten the progression from HIV infection to AIDS and worsen malaria.
- Malnutrition and anaemia, major problems that affects mother and children in developing countries, can be prevented and treated by regular deworming.
- Nowadays, inexpensive, single-dose and highly effective deworming drugs are available.
- Deworming drugs should be taken 6 monthly (2 times per year).
- It is safe to carry out deworming even during pregnancy (at 5th and 8th month of pregnancy).

**AXESSTEL brand CDMA phones to be introduced**

YANGON, 18 Dec—MobileDistribution, branch of Mobilemate Communications Co. Ltd -dealing in communications devices industry will organize a ceremony in Park Royal Hotel at 2 p.m. on 23 December to introduce Korean brand CDMA 450 MHz, fixed wireless phones of AXESSTEL Corporation and manufacturing technology as it is now entering the telecommunications devices market as sole agent in Myanmar.

AXESSTEL fixed wireless phones are multi-functional devices with a number of features such as voice, SMS, data, e-mail and FM radio which can be used not only in coastal towns like Sittway, Thandwe, Pathein, Hinthada, Maubin, Pyapon, Kayangyangon, Yangon, Bogale, Danubyu, Myaungmya, Thaton, Mawlamyine, Dawei, Myeik and Kawthoung and in any other towns within CDMA 450 MHz network.

Mobilemate Distribution will organize Special Promotion Sales from 27 to 31 December at Capital Hyper Market.

Details can be enquired at Mobilemate Telecommunications Co. Ltd.No.290/A, Pyay Road, Myaynigon, Sanyoung Township, Yangon, (Tels: 01-526989,01-537283).—MNA

**Cash donated for respect paying of YTU and YIT students**

YANGON, 19 Dec— Old engineering students of YIT and YTU held a ceremony to donate cash for holding 3rd respect paying ceremony to faculty members who discharged the part time and full time duties at the meeting hall of Myanmar Engineering Society on Yangon University (Hline Campus) on 13 December.

At the ceremony, chairman of the organizing committee U Ohn Kyaw, Vice-Chairman U Ko Ko Gyi and executive U Win Nang donated K200,000 for fund of Myanmar Engineering Society’s Library to chairman U Than Myint of MES, CEC member U Myint Pe and U Myint Soe.

Afterwards, on behalf of civil engineering students graduated in 1995, U Myat Khaing Swe, Daw Than Than Win, Daw Thin Thin Cho, Daw Hnin Nwe Aye and U Aung May Oo and Daw Khin Thida donated K1,100,000 to Chairman U Ohn Kyaw and Daw Malar Swe, Daw Thin Thin Cho, Daw Hnin Nwe Aye and Daw Than Than Win, K 500,000 to Secretary U Kyaw Lin on behalf of civil engineering students graduated in 1982.

Key chains, sport shirts, photos and towels may be purchased at the ceremony day.—NLM

**Old civil engineering students present cash donation to responsible persons of MES. —NLM**
Future Tatmadaw depends upon soldiers, who possess...  

(from page 1)
everyone of you should be a model leading the life of a good soldier, and constantly striving for the betterment of your unit. As Tatmadaw is a firmly established organization, unit members should carry out their duties with team spirit in building unity within the Tatmadaw in taking the leadership role. 

Comrades. 

With the rapid advancement and progress in science and technology in the world today, we need a modern Tatmadaw for the total defence of the nation. 

In building a modern Tatmadaw, all of you military engineers must perform duty vigorously. Nowadays, in modern warfare, advanced weaponry with pin-point accuracy, vehicles, armory are being used together with the combination of military sciences such as Command, Control, Communication, Computers (C4), Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) and Military Strategy. In Science and Technology, we have come to the stage ‘invent and utilize’ from ‘produce and make use’, thus in order to handle them skilfully you all must study continuously. Moreover, all of you need to put all out effort to make innovations to become inventors yourselves. You all should believe that the future Tatmadaw depends upon you soldiers, who possess the patriotism, perseverance, diligence, endeavour and efforts of the intellectuals and the intelligentsia. 

Comrades. 

You all may be fully aware that today, countries that possess highly advanced technology are interfering in the sovereignty of countries that have lower capacity. Moreover, it is clearly visible all-over the world that natural resources from under-developed countries are being exploited by various ways and means. Our country, basically is, endowed with plentiful of natural resources. In striving to build the country, rapid progress can be achieved if we can produce with modern technology without depending on others. Since natural resources can be exhausted one day, we must acquire industrial technology by ourselves for the survival of mankind. Thus, in building a modern developed nation, we have laid down and implemented the Four Economic Objectives. 

Since the industrial sector is mainly based on human resources, it is well known to all comrades that priority has been given to the education sector to bring up human resources in all regions of the country. Because of evil legacy of the colonialists, our country lagged behind in development of technology and I would, therefore, like to insist all of you to try your best to develop our country to become a modern one which is able to keep abreast of the world. 

Comrades. 

Different national races have been residing together in our country since time immemorial. Even though they are enjoying different cultures in different places, they have similarities in having loving-kindness, simplicity, nationalism, helpfulness, tolerance and the spirit of forgiveness. The basic foundation for the perpetuity of sovereignty of the nation where different national races are residing is national unity. 

While taking the responsibilities of the State, the Tatmadaw, based on the historical experiences, laid down the national policy of “Our Three Main National Causes”, and the 12 political, economic and social objectives have been implemented. As we have been implementing these objectives with the genuine “cetana” (good-will), national unity has been regained throughout the country that has never been achieved before under any previous time. Consequently, regional development projects have been implemented with momentum. 

As you are going to serve throughout the country time and again, you are required to strictly abide by the codes of conduct of the Tatmadawmen in order to gain the trust and confidence of the local people. Apart from that, it is also required to obey the dos and don’ts of the region.
Future Tatmadaw depends upon soldiers, who possess...

(from page 8)

I wish to urge you to join hands with the local national brethren in implementation of the regional development projects and build a solidified and strengthened national unity.

Comrades,

Finally, I would like to urge you that in accordance with the motto of DSTA’s Alma Mater “Technology for Military Might”, it is incumbent upon all of you to try to establish yourselves as technocrats and to utilize effectively your know-how and ability in building a modern Tatmadaw. In striving to build an industrial nation, you all, to be a trusted technocrat, will have to study constantly the subjects on military science and technology that are advancing. I have a word that, all of you, wherever your assigned post may be, in achieving a firm and strong national solidarity must join hands with the local brethren in projects for their development. With this, I conclude my speech.—MNA
NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec — Under the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health, Shwe Parami Tawya Sayadaw Ashin Chandhadhika and lay persons and members of social organizations and Yenangyoung Township Association (Yangon), a ceremony to mark the successful completion of providing free health care to patients with eye complaints in Yenangyoung Township and surrounding townships was held at People’s Hospital in Yenangyoung Township, Magway on 15 December.

It was attended by Sayadaw Ashin Chandhadhika, Head of Administration Department of Myanmar Women’s Affairs Federation Dr Daw Khin Hsan Nwe, eye specialists of the Ministry of Health, departmental officials, nurses, the medical superintendent of Yenangyoung Township People’s Hospital and health staff, responsible persons of Yenangyoung Township Association (Yangon), members of social organizations, wellwishers and townselders.

The eye specialist team comprising 18 doctors, 10 nurses and one health staff from Alcom Co led by Eye Specialist Dr Kan Nyunt and Dr Daw Khin Hsan Nwe performed eye surgeries. They provided free health care services to 4507 outpatients and 560 patients with eye complaints and presented glasses to 991 local people. Sayadaw Ashin Chandhadhika and wellwishers, Yenangyoung Township Association (Yangon), five pharmaceutical companies provided medicines and cost for medical treatments and the medical superintendent of Yenangyoung Township People’s Hospital and health staff, social organization members and local people gave helping hands to the eye specialist team.

Energy Minister inspects oil fields

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec—Minister for Energy Brig-Gen Lun Thi looked into Kyauk-kwat, Latpanto oil fields in Myaing Township in Magway Division on 15 December.

The minister inspected installation of imported ZJ 70 L SR II drilling machine to be used in kyauk-kwat test well No.1. The minister urged the staff to try to be proficient in respective fields and called for carrying out work in time.

Out of 4 drilling machines imported, 3 sets of machine have arrived here while the remaining one will be delivered soon and preparations for drilling works are in progress.

The minister also looked into LPG plant in Magway Division.

Free medical treatment provided in Yenangyoung Township

NAY PYI TAW, 19 Dec — Under the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health, Shwe Parami Tawya Sayadaw Ashin Chandhadhika and lay persons and members of social organizations and Yenangyoung Township Association (Yangon), a ceremony to mark the successful completion of providing free health care to patients with eye complaints in Yenangyoung Township and surrounding townships was held at People’s Hospital in Yenangyoung Township, Magway on 15 December.

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Energy Minister inspects installation of imported drilling machine to be used in Kyauk-kwat test well No.1. —ENERGY

Eye specialists providing free medical treatment to patients at Yenangyoung Township People’s Hospital.

MNA
Bomb material found in Ore suspect’s home

SALEM, 19 Dec— Authorities found bomb-making material at the rural home of a man accused along with his son of killing two law enforcement officers in an explosion at a bank, according to a court document released on Thursday. Some of the material found at Bruce Turnidge’s home matched that used in the bomb that killed the officers and critically injured a third 12 Dec, the probable cause statement said. It also said some of the material was found in a nearby stream, with fresh foot and tire tracks leading to it. The document said the search turned up two tubes of the explosive Tovex, which manufacturer Web sites say is a replacement for dynamite used in mining and excavating. Bruce Turnidge in the past has worked as an excavator. Other items turned up in a search of Turnidge’s home and shop and the nearby stream were angle iron, sheet metal, metal grating, bolts, wiring and plywood with green spray paint matching the color of a metal box containing the bomb that exploded at the West Coast Bank in Woodburn, the document said. Several of the items matched materials used in the bomb, the document said, but aside from the paint it did not say which items matched.

Las Vegas gets record Dec snowfall, 3.6 inches

LAS VEGAS, 19 Dec— Flights resumed in and out of Las Vegas, but schools and highways were closed Thursday after a record-setting snowfall coated marquee signs on the Strip, weighed down palm trees and blanketed surrounding mountain areas. The city awoke to clear weather after a storm that left 3.6 inches at McCarran International Airport. It was biggest December snowfall on record there, and the worst for any month since a 7 1/2-inch accumulation in January 1979, forecasters said. The storm Wednesday and early Thursday also dumped snow or rain and snarled travel in other parts of Nevada, much of southern California and parts of northern Arizona. "It looks like Whoville, all snow, but with less joy and more extreme misery," said Calen Weiss, 19, who was stuck Wednesday when snow in the Cajon Pass east of Los Angeles disrupted travel on Interstate 15. Cajon Pass and another leg of Interstate 15 near the Nevada line both reopened by midday Thursday, while Interstate 5, the major route between Northern and Southern California, partially re-opened. In Washington state, Seattle got a rare 4-inch accumulation, and the 19.4 inches of snow that piled up at Spokane International Airport smashed the 24-hour record total of 13 inches set in 1950. And snow continued to fall.

Japan launches first solar cargo ship

Tokyo, 19 Dec— The world’s first cargo ship partly propelled by solar power took to the seas on Friday in Japan, aiming to cut fuel costs and carbon emissions when automakers export their products.

Auriga Leader, a freighter developed by shipping line Nippon Yusen KK and oil distributor Nippon Oil Corp, took off from a shipyard in the western city of Kobe, officials of the two firms said. The huge freighter capable of carrying 6,400 automobiles is equipped with 328 solar panels on a cost of 150 million yen (1.68 million dollars), the officials said. The ship will initially transport vehicles being sent for sale overseas by Japan’s top automaker Toyota Motor Corp. The project was conceived before the global economic crisis, which has forced automakers to drastically cut production and sales.

First coal mine in Bangladesh built by Chinese

DHAKA, 19 Dec— The first coal mine in Bangladeshi built by the Chinese was highly lauded by both sides saying it is a model of successful cooperation between the two countries. The construction started in 1996 and finished in 2005. The signing ceremony for closing the construction project agreement was signed in 1994 between China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC) and Petrobangla, the national oil, gas and mineral company of Bangladesh.

Boy, 4, breaks into Texas store, plays with toys

Police called to a variety store by a burglar alarm overnight found a toddler inside, playing with the toys. Police said store surveillance video showed the unidentified boy trying to open one of the front doors to a Family Dollar store, only to find it locked. But the second door was unlocked and the child went inside. That triggered the silent alarm. Detective Randy Stevens said the child apparently unlocked a door at his nearby home, got out, then crossed a multiflane street to reach the store. A canvass of the neighborhood turned up a family member searching for the child.

CPS spokesman Shari Pulliam said Child Protective Services claimed oversight of a 4-year-old boy during a review of the incident. The boy will be allowed to stay with other relatives, not the parents, during the CPS review period.

Man accused of stealing fridge with urine samples

Authorities say a man was arrested for stealing a small refrigerator from a probation office used to store urine samples, including his own. The Alachua County Sheriff's Office said a 26-year-old man stole the fridge after testing positive for drug use. Police said he went to the office Sunday, shot out a window to get inside and removed the locked refrigerator. Probation officers gave investigators a list of names of those whose drug samples were stored in the stolen fridge. Investigators tracked down the suspect at his home where they found shards of glass with blood on them.

The fridge is still missing, but the man was being held at the Alachua County jail. He’s charged with arson, destroying evidence, burglary and larceny.

Vasan, a baby Tapir, explores with its mother Sayang the enclosure at Edinburgh Zoo, Scotland. The birth or Vasan is a special event as it is the first time a Malayan Tapir has been born at the zoo and is also the first baby for this particular adult Tapir. Tapirs are hoofed mammals and are related to rhinos and horses.

Another Florida man accused of sandwich assault

Police said a Port St Lucie man was arrested for throwing a sandwich at his girlfriend, the second food attack that sent a man to jail in about a month. According to a police report released Monday, the 20-year-old man threw the sandwich at his girlfriend’s face during an argument about auto insurance and then hit her head with his fist.

The man admitted to throwing the food but not hitting her. He was arrested Friday and faces a battery charge.

Last month, another man was arrested on a battery charge for hitting his girlfriend with a sandwich, knocking her glasses off and nearly causing a traffic crash.

Police reports did not what type of sandwich was used in either attack.

The Toyota Vehicle Distribution Centre at the Port of Long Beach. Internet

The huge freighter capable of carrying 6,400 automobiles is equipped with 328 solar panels on a cost of 150 million yen (1.68 million dollars), the officials said. The ship will initially transport vehicles being sent for sale overseas by Japan’s top automaker Toyota Motor Corp. The project was conceived before the global economic crisis, which has forced automakers to drastically cut production and sales.

Vasan is a special event as it is the first and the only coal mine in the country. The coal mine construction project agreement was signed in 1994 between China National Machinery Import and Export Corporation (CMC) and Petrobangla, the national oil, gas and mineral company of Bangladesh.

CPS spokeswoman Shari Pulliam said Child Protective Services claimed oversight of a 4-year-old boy during a review of the incident. The boy will be allowed to stay with other relatives, not the parents, during the CPS review period.

Sydney Olympics synchronized swimming silver medalist Miho Takeda (C) and swimmers perform in the water during a preview of the Muscle Musical at a Tokyo theater.

The huge freighter capable of carrying 6,400 automobiles is equipped with 328 solar panels on a cost of 150 million yen (1.68 million dollars), the officials said. The ship will initially transport vehicles being sent for sale overseas by Japan’s top automaker Toyota Motor Corp.
Moroccan jailed over Madrid bombs

RABAT, 19 Dec — A Moroccan man has been sentenced to 20 years in prison for his part in the Madrid train bombings of 2004.

Abdelilah Ahriz was found guilty of being part of the criminal group that carried out the attack and of raising money for terrorist activities.

He denied the charges and his lawyer said he would appeal.

Nearly 200 people were killed and more than 1,800 injured in the commuter train bombings, which were carried out by a group linked to al-Qaeda.

Ahriz is the latest Moroccan to receive a heavy prison sentence for playing a role in the Madrid bombings.

Two weeks ago another Moroccan received a 10-year sentence over the attack.—Internet

Australia Navy to rescue stricken French sailor

SYDNEY, 19 Dec—An Australian Navy ship is sailing into the Southern Ocean on Friday to rescue a stricken French round-the-world sailor who broke his leg when his yacht hit a large wave.

The HMAS Arunta frigate may take three days to reach 34-year-old Yann Elies on his 60-foot yacht, which is about 900 nautical miles south of Perth on Australia’s west coast.

“But he’s in a pretty dire situation with a broken leg and onboard a yacht by himself in the middle of the Southern Ocean,” Stephen Langford, a doctor, told local radio from the Arunta.

Elies is competing in the Vendee Globe round-the-world solo yacht race. His yacht Generali was hit by a large wave on Thursday night as he changed sails, throwing him against the boat and breaking his thigh-bone.—Internet

Nicole Buffett, granddaughter of the world’s richest man, Warren Buffett, cut off

SYDNEY, 19 Dec—When your grandfather’s the world’s richest man, you’d hardly expect to have to worry about paying the bills.

But Nicole Buffett, the dreadlocked granddaughter of the notoriously frugal Nebraska mega-billionaire Warren Buffett, has lifted the veil on just how tough the so-called Oracle of Omaha makes life for his family.

In an interview published yesterday, the 32-year-old artist reveals that she has been financially cut off by her grandfather and lives on the money she makes selling her paintings.

In part because of her famous surname, she has made about $US40,000 ($57,000) in sales this year from her modest base in the hipster enclave of Berkeley, outside San Francisco. —Internet

China-EU joint work on biodiversity protection bears fruit

BEIJING, 19 Dec—The European Commission (EC) Delegation to China, and the EU-China Biodiversity Conservation Program (ECBP) held a “Biodiversity Evening” here on Thursday to launch a book on biological diversity across China.

“Green Gold of China” has 500 images of the living situation of wild animals and plants. It covers the economic significance of protecting biological diversity.

Serge Abou, Ambassador of the EC Delegation to China, said China has seen environmental deterioration and could learn from the experience of Europe, which also neglected biodiversity protection years ago.

“Conserving biodiversity is a fundamental part of development,” he said. “China’s exceptional biodiversity makes it even more relevant.”

John Mackinnon, co-author of the book and director of the Visibility and Awareness Component of ECBP, said: “Whether China can save its rare species and their natural habitats depends on the public’s awareness of protection and their resolution to take action.”

Wang Haibin, another co-author and a former State Forestry Administration employee on animal protection, said: “We hope this book not only helps adults become more aware of biodiversity protection, but also their children.”

Australian Army to rescue stricken French sailor

Hamas declares ceasefire with Israel in Gaza

GAZA, 19 Dec—Hamas on Thursday declared an end to a six-month-old Egyptian-brokered cease-fire with Israel in the Gaza Strip, raising the prospect of an escalation in cross-border fighting.

“The calm is over,” Hamas official Aymaan Taha said in an announcement after concluding talks with Palestinian factions in the coastal enclave controlled by the Islamist group.

He said the cease-fire, which Hamas says was scheduled to expire on 19 December, would not be renewed “because the enemy did not abide by its obligations” to ease a crippling blockade of the Gaza Strip and halt all attacks.

Hamas stopped short of threatening an immediate escalation against Israel, which had hoped to extend the truce and appears wary of a confrontation that could cause heavy casualties on both sides.—Internet

Donate Blood
**NASA set to launch ‘CO2 hunter’**

The US space agency is set to launch a satellite that can map in detail where carbon dioxide is in the atmosphere. —INTERNET

HOUSTON, 19 Dec — The US space agency is set to launch a satellite that can map in detail where carbon dioxide is in the atmosphere.

NASA’s Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO) will pinpoint the key locations on the Earth’s surface where CO2 is being emitted and absorbed.

CO2 from human activities is thought to be driving climate changes, but important facts about its movement through the atmosphere remain elusive.

The agency believes the technology on OCO can end some of the mysteries.

Dr Crisp has been presenting details of the mission here at the American Geophysical Union’s (AGU) Fall Meeting. As he did so, OCO’s launch on a Taurus XL rocket from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California was booked for 23 February. NASA already has a CO2 detection instrument on its Aqua satellite but this looks at the greenhouse gas some five to 10km above the surface.

OCO, on the other hand, will detail the concentration of carbon dioxide close to the ground where its warming effect is most keenly felt.

The observatory will be engaged in what amounts to carbon accountancy. Its fortnightly global maps of CO2 concentration will help the mission team work out where the gas is entering the atmosphere and where it is being absorbed by land plants and the oceans.

Scientists have calculated that nature cycles about 330 billion tonnes of carbon every year. —INTERNET

**Secret sketches a da Vinci mystery**

PARIS, 19 Dec — Drawings on the back of a Leonardo da Vinci painting may have been sketched by the Italian Renaissance artist, but only more tests by museum experts will tell.

The Department of Paintings at the Louvre Museum in Paris and restoration and research experts from the Museums of France discovered the images this year on the back of the painting “The Virgin and Child with St Anne,” the Louvre said in a news release Thursday.

The style of the sketches resembles that of da Vinci, but the experts said closer examinations must be done to confirm they are his.

After the art experts began studying the circa 1500 painting, an oil on wood, a conservator from the Paintings Department discovered two barely visible drawings on the back of it — a horse’s head and a partial skull.

Closer scrutiny also revealed another sketch showing the infant Jesus with a lamb.

The drawings, almost impossible to see with the human eye, were photographed with an infrared reflectographic camera, to reveal the underdrawings.

The technique intensifies the degree of absorption of certain pigments, such as those that are carbon-based, which was the preferred material used for preparatory drawings during da Vinci’s era.

According to the experts, drawings on the back of paintings is “extremely rare,” and none have been found so far that can be attributed to da Vinci. —INTERNET

**Tumour in baby’s brain contained a foot**

NEW YORK, 19 Dec — A tumour removed from a baby’s brain contained a foot and other partially formed body parts, a US paediatric neurosurgeon says. Dr Paul Grabb said Sam Esquibel had a microscopic tumour that was identified after an MRI scan.

He said he discovered a nearly perfect foot, the formation of another foot, a hand and a thigh which removing the tumour, the Associated Press reported. “It looked like the breach delivery of a baby, borderline, unheard of,” Dr Grabb said the growth may have been a type of congenital brain tumour, or the start of a twin forming within another. “But such cases rarely occur in the brain,” Dr Grabb said.

Manual and Tiffanie Esquibel said their son, only three days old when the October 3 operation took place, would have monthly blood tests to check for signs of cancer or regrowth, the Associated Press reported.

**BA and Qantas scrap merger talks**

SYDNEY, 19 Dec — British Airways and Qantas have ended talks after failing to reach a deal on a potential $6.4bn (£4.1bn) merger. Earlier this month the two airlines had said they were in talks about joining forces through a dual-listed company. In a joint statement the airlines said that despite the “potential longer term benefits” they had “not been able to come to an agreement”.

The two said they would continue to co-operate on their joint business between Australia and the UK. Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce had warned last week that the merger faced major hurdles and would only go ahead if Qantas could secure major revenue and cost benefits. He also said he regretted the fact that news of the talks had become public knowledge.

A tie-up between BA and Qantas faced several challenges, particularly over how ownership of the combined business would be divided between the two carriers.

The idea was for the two airlines to come together as a dual-listed company - both in the UK and Australia. BA said in a statement on Thursday that it would not agree to Qantas owning more than 50% of the combined firm - even though Qantas is currently the larger company by market value. —INTERNET

**South Philippines blasts kill two**

ILIGAN, 19 Dec — Two people have died in twin explosions at shops in the city of Iligan in the southern Philippines.

At least 47 people were injured — two critically — in the blasts, which went off minutes apart in two shops packed with Christmas shoppers.

Police have blamed “terrorists” for the bombs, and Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has vowed to bring the perpetrators to justice.

Iligan is on the island of Mindanao, which has an active Muslim insurgency. There have been sporadic clashes between government troops and rebels fighting for self rule since August, when a court blocked a land deal aimed at ending years of fighting.

The bombs appeared to be home-made, and one report said they were packed with nails.

They were placed at baggage counters close to the entrance of both stores where customers check their bags before shopping, police said. —INTERNET
**Brazilian Gilberto on the way out at Tottenham**

**London, 19 Dec** — Tottenham manager Harry Redknapp revealed Brazilian Gilberto’s time at White Hart Lane was about to be over following their 2-2 draw against Spartak Moscow in the UEFA Cup.

The result meant Spurs go into Friday’s draw for the two-legged, round of 32 matches scheduled for next February.

It was Gilberto’s error which conceded the first goal for Spartak though strikes by Lukas Modric and Tom Huddlestone earned the north Londoners the draw they needed to progress.

“He (Gilberto) was quite happy to come off,” Redknapp said. “There’s not really a way back for him here. The boy doesn’t want to play here. He’s a nice guy but just doesn’t feel confident playing here.”

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**Ronaldo says I'm happy at United**

**Yokohama, 19 Dec** — Cristiano Ronaldo insists he is “very happy” at Manchester United after reports linking him with a move to Real Madrid at the end of the season infuriated Sir Alex Ferguson.

Spanish newspaper El Mundo reported that the two clubs had a gentleman’s agreement to transfer Ronaldo to the Bernabeu next summer following a bitter tug-of-war for him this year.

“I don’t care what people are saying,” the Portuguese, who has not hidden his desire to play in Spain one day, told reporters here, where Manchester United are playing in the Club World Cup.

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**Fred asks for a termination of his Lyon contract**

**Paris, 19 Dec** — Lyon’s Brazil international striker Fred has told club president Jean-Michel Aulas to terminate his contract which runs until June next year, the player told French radio on Thursday.

Fred, who has had several injuries during the past year, said he wanted to leave the seven-time French champions because of lack of first team action.

“As I am not playing, I asked the president to terminate my contract,” Fred told RTL radio station. “My aim is to play in the 2010 World Cup. At club level I want to play, to score goals and I think that is difficult here at Lyon.

“When I come on with 20 to 15 minutes to go, that is not enough time to express myself at 100 percent and I cannot give my all. Because of that I want to leave.”

Fred said he had already told Aulas and Lyon coach Claude Puel that he would not be extending his contract. “Even if I got very good terms financially, money is not everything in life and I need to play football which gives me so much pleasure.”

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**Kinnear optimistic Owen will stay in Magpies’ nest**

**London, 19 Dec** — Newcastle United manager Joe Kinnear is increasingly confident Michael Owen will stay at St James’ Park after holding contract talks with the English striker.

Owen’s current 103,000 pounds-a-week (153,969 dollars) deal expires at the end of the current season.

Kinnear said on Thursday that Owen had been offered a new three-year contract and that, having initially been downbeat about holding onto the former Liverpool and Real Madrid forward, he was optimistic of keeping his highly-prized asset.

“I spent about an hour with him a couple of days ago,” former Wimbledon manager Kinnear, 61, said on Thursday.

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**De Ceglie signs Juve contract extension**

**Rome, 19 Dec** — Young midfielder Paolo De Ceglie, seen here in November 2008, has signed a contract extension at Juventus until 2013, the club said on Thursday.

While not a first team regular, the 22-year-old, who spent last season on loan at Siena, has made seven starts and eight substitute appearances this season and provided the cross for one of Amauri’s goals against AC Milan last weekend.

“This extension is an important step in my career and the result of many years of sacrifice,” said De Ceglie.

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**Gamba coach rue missed opportunities**

**Yokohama, 19 Dec** — Gamba Osaka coach Akira Nishino was left rue missed opportunities in their 3-2 loss to Manchester United at the Club World Cup, and he made clear he wasn’t satisfied.

“People told me it was an exciting game, but for me, it’s not exciting at all. When the teams score goals, it’s exciting for the spectators. I accept it if the score was reversed,” he said of their semi-final on Thursday.

Nishino guided Japan to a historic victory over powerhouse Brazil in the Atlanta Olympics, the so-called “miracle in Miami,” but his tactics of tight defence and counter-attacks were criticized as boring.
Three Russian warships visit Cold War ally Cuba

HAVANA, 19 Dec—A Russian anti-submarine destroyer and two logistical warships are entering waters off Cuba in a nonmilitary visit that’s the first of its kind since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

The Admiral Chabanenko vessel is unfurling black plumes of smoke as it chugs toward Havana Bay, flanked by two smaller boats. Closer to shore, a barge that routinely ferries food from the United States to the communist-run island is apparently moving to make room for the Russian boats.

Washington’s trade embargo allows direct sale of US agricultural products to Cuba. The Russian ships plan to moor on Friday in Havana in a show of increased cooperation between the two countries, though Cuba’s government is not commenting.

One dead, 15 injured in bridge collapse

ATLANTA, 19 Dec—One worker is dead and 15 other people injured after a bridge under construction collapsed at the Atlanta Botanical Garden.

Atlanta Fire Capt Gregory Shinkle says the bridge collapsed just after 9 am Friday. He says scaffolding was being used to pour concrete for a new elevated bridge at the garden collapsed. About a dozen ambulances were on the scene in Midtown Atlanta. Shinkle said some injured workers were taken out of the accident area on backboards.

WEATHER

Friday, 19 December, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST: During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Rakhine State, upper Sagaing, Bago and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining areas. Night temperatures were (3°C) to (4°C) below December average temperatures in Mon State, upper Sagaing and Taninthayi Divisions. (6°C) below December average temperatures in Chin State, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Kachin and Shan States, Mandalay and Bago Divisions and about December average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant night temperatures were Hakha (-2°C) and Loilim (1°C).

Maximum temperature on 18-12-2008 was 89°F. Minimum temperature on 19-12-2008 was 64°F. Relative humidity at (09:30) hours MST was 68%. Total sunshine hours on 18-12-2008 was (8.9) hrs approx.

Rainfall on 19-12-2008 was (Nil) at Mungaladon, Kaba Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-1-2008 was (110.31) inches at Mungaladon,(120.95) inches at Kaba-Aye and (140.94) inches at Central Yangon.

Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (4) mph from North at (18:30) hours MST on 18-12-2008.

Bay inference: Weather is partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 20th December 2008: Weather will be generally fair in Kayah, Kayin and Mon States and partly cloudy in the remaining States and Divisions.

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Generally fair weather in the whole country.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighouring area for 20-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighouring area for 20-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighouring area for 20-12-2008: Generally fair weather.

Weather outlook for fourth weekend of December 2008: During the coming weekend, weather will be partly cloudy in Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon Divisions, generally fair in Mandalay Division.
Four political objectives
- Stability of the State, community peace and tranquility, 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