Rubber, oil palm thriving in Myeik, Palaw townships

Lt-Gen Tha Aye of the Ministry of Defence inspects 320-acre rubber plantation of farmer U Aung Lin in Mayanbinchaung village in Myeik.—MNA

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—Lt-Gen Tha Aye of the Ministry of Defence inspected the 320 acres of rubber plantation of U Aung Lin of Mayanbinchaung village in Myeik Township, ten acres of model oil palm plantation of Coastal Region Command in Bokchan Village, the axis of Dawei-Myeik railroad, site for construction of Meelaung Creek Bridge and Station in Myeik Township and the site chosen for construction of Tabo Station in Tabo Village.

Lt-Gen Tha Aye also inspected supply of power from Aungsetky bio-gas power station and repair of Myeik-Dawei road near Toe Village, the site for construction of Palaw Station in Palaw Township and vegetable plantation of regional battalions in Palaung Township.

Lt-Gen Tha Aye inspected Palaung Township Hospital and presented hospital equipment and medicines with officials and cash assistance to the patients.

Lt-Gen Tha Aye inspected the 1,500-acre rubber plantation of Coastal Region Command and housing complex for war veterans, rubber and oil palm plantations on both sides of Myeik-Dawei Road and the 6,000 acres of oil palm plantation of U Kin Sein in Palaung Township.—MNA

Caffeine has greater effect on men, and starts only ten minutes after consumption

Caffeine has a much greater effect on men than women.—INTERNET

BARCELONA, 23 Dec — A study headed by researchers from the University of Barcelona (UB) shows that caffeine has a greater effect on men than women, and that these effects start just 10 minutes after it is drunk. In addition, contrary to what was previously thought, it has also been shown that decaffeinated coffee also produces an increased state of alertness.

“Numerous studies have demonstrated the stimulating effects of caffeine, but none of these have looked at their effects in terms of the consumer’s gender,” Ana Adam, lead author of the study and a researcher in the Psychiatry and Clinical Psychobiology Department of the UB, tells SINC. Research into the effects of caffeine tends to be carried out using preparations in which the caffeine level is much higher than normal intake. According to Adam, the novelty of this study lies in “the difference seen in the effects on men and women, based on the quantities of caffeine people take in 99% of cases (espresso coffee and decaffeinated espresso coffee, containing 100mg and 5mg of caffeine, respectively”),—INTERNET

Diarra chose Real Madrid honour over Man City riches

MADRID, 23 Dec—Lassana Diarra has disclosed that he has rejected a more lucrative move to Manchester City in order to accept the honour of being a Real Madrid player.

The France international midfielder has confirmed his transfer to the Santiago Bernabeu that will be completed when the transfer window opens in the New Year.

Portsmouth, who are facing financial problems, had recently accepted an ‘exceptional’ offer from the Spanish giants with the fee reported to be £20milion after the 23-year-old former Chelsea and Arsenal player attracted attention from the European powerhouse with impressive performances at Fratton Park and for his country.

Diarra told L’Equipe: “Were Manchester City keen to sign me? Yes, indeed.

“On a financial level, I would have earned a lot more. I love the Premier League, but Real are very attractive. I believe I have earned respect.”

He said: “I was in England for five years, and I have learnt a lot of things there. I became very attached to the Premier League.—INTERNET
**PERSPECTIVES**

Wednesday, 24 December, 2008

**Cultivate and export beans and pulses on a wider scale**

Myanmar is blessed with plenty of water sources, temperate climate, favourable geographical features and fertile soil. So, it grows grain crops such as paddy, wheat and corn, edible oil crops such as sesame, groundnut and sunflower, and industrial crops such as cotton, jute, and sugarcane, and beans and pulses on a large scale.

Beans and pulses are rich in protein. So, beans and pulses, like rice and wheat, are in growing demand in local and foreign markets. Consuming peas every day contributes to intellectual development and physical growth.

Black gram, a marketable crop at home and abroad, is grown on a commercial scale in Ayeyawady, Bago, Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Divisions. Chick pea is grown mostly in Sagaing, Magway and Mandalay Divisions. Mandalay Division grows soya bean as a cold season crop. Madaya, Myingyan and Ngazun Townships cultivate soya bean more than any other region.

Myanmar’s beans and pulses have a foothold in the international market, so it is required to take measures to get high prices. High-yield quality strains of beans and pulses are to be cultivated extensively to boost export, and priority is to be given to the strains that do not need much chemical fertilizer and pesticide.

Since November, Myanmar has boosted export of beans and pulses across China-Myanmar border, through which it exports beans and pulses most. It also increased exporting beans and pulses by sea in early December. Myanmar’s beans and pulses go mostly to India, Pakistan, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. Plans are now under way to seek more foreign markets for the crops.

Therefore, entrepreneurs and farmers will be able to gain higher income by cultivating beans and pulses of suitable quality strains on a wider scale and exploring new markets.

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**Runways extended at Mandalay International Airport and Hkamti Airport**

*Oppose those relying on external elements, acting as stooges, holding negative views*
*Oppose those trying to jeopardize stability of the State and progress of the nation*
*Oppose foreign nations interfering in internal affairs of the State*
*Crush all internal and external destructive elements as the common enemy*

**Yangon, 23 Dec—**Minister for Transport Maj-Gen Thein Swe and officials concerned inspected Mandalay International Airport and gave necessary instructions on 20 December.

Upon arrival at Hkamti Airport, the minister and party looked into progress in extending the runway. Hkamti original runway is 4200 feet long and 100 feet wide. The already-extended runway is 6000 feet long, 100 feet wide and 24.5 inches high.

**Mayor Brig-Gen Aung Thein Lin, UMFCCI Vice-President U Zaw Min Win and Malaysian Ambassador Mr. Mazlan Mohamad open the seminar on palm oil and oil products jointly organized by Felda Delima Oil Products Sdn Bhd and Malaysia Palm Oil Council (MPOC) in collaboration with YCDC and UMFCCI at Traders Hotel on 19 December, 2008.**

**Minister Maj-Gen Thein Swe inspects progress in extending the runway of Hkamti Airport.**

**Yangon, 23 Dec—**Under the aegis of Myanmar Fish Entrepreneur Association and Myanmar Prawn Entrepreneur Association, the concluding ceremony of No. 6 basic course of fresh water prawn breeding was held at the Thiriannawa hall of Myanmar Fisheries Department here this morning. First, Director-General of Fisheries Department U Khin Maung Aye delivered a speech. Next, President of Myanmar Fisheries Entrepreneur Association U Htay Myint and Myanmar Prawn Entrepreneur Association U Hla Shwe Maung made speeches.

Then, Director-General of Fisheries Department U Khin Maung Aye gave the completion certificates to the trainees, and on behalf of the trainees, the representative spoke words of thanks. Afterwards, officials concerned presented instructors gifts.
UN recognizes end of mandate of multinational force in Iraq

UNITED NATIONS, 23 Dec—The UN Security Council unanimously voted on Monday to recognize the expiration of the mandate of the US-led multinational force in Iraq (MNF-I) by the end of the year. The 15-member body adopted a US-British resolution “recognizing the expiration of the mandate of the multinational force at the end of 31 December 2008,” as requested by the Iraqi government.

“This termination marks a turning point for Iraq and the end of an important era for the UN and, above all, the contributing countries to the MNF-I,” Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said.

Zebari said that Iraq and the United States have negotiated “new security arrangements to direct the future bilateral partnership” between the two countries, including an agreement on the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq and a strategic framework agreement for US-Iraq friendship and cooperation, which have been approved by the Iraqi government and parliament.

Past Security Council resolutions which authorized and extended the MNF mandate, have been based on the premise that the MNF-I’s continued presence would be until such time that Iraq can assume full responsibility and self-sufficiency in maintaining security for the country and the people of Iraq,” he said.

WASHINGTON, 23 Dec—A press release by the US military out of Karmah, Iraq, said a Marine died Sunday as a result of wounds received when he was attacked by enemy forces.

The release today by Multinational Corps-Iraq said the name of the deceased Marine was being withheld pending notification of next-of-kin.

About 1,000 Marines with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Marines out of Kane‘ohe Bay are based in and around Karmah, which is near the western city of Fallujah.

Marine Corps Base Hawai‘i’s officials could not be reached to determine whether the fallen Marine is based out of Hawai‘i.

Three killed in suicide blast in southern Afghan Ghazni

GHAZNI, 23 Dec—A suicide blast killed three people and injured five others in the centre of the southern Afghan city of Ghazni on Monday, police said.

A car filled with explosives detonated while an alleged suicide bomber was driving along a busy road in Ghazni, about 120 kilometres southwest of the capital, Kabul, Ghazni provincial deputy police chief Mohammad Zaman said.

“Three civilians, the suicide attacker and his driver were killed and five civilians were wounded,” Zaman told Pakistan’s Geo News.

Zaman said the bomber’s target was not clear and the bomb may have exploded prematurely.

The road on which the blast occurred leads to the provincial governor’s office as well as several government buildings.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Obama’s election voted top news story of 2008

NEW YORK, 23 Dec—The epic election that made Barack Obama the first African-American president was the top news story of 2008—followed closely by the economic meltdown that will test his leadership, according to US editors and news directors voting in The Associated Press’ annual poll.

The campaign, with subplots emerging throughout the year, received 100 first-place votes out of 155 ballots cast for the top 10 stories. Two other political sagas—the history-making candidacies of Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sarah Palin—also made the list.

The vast economic crisis, plunging the US into recession and ravaging many business sectors worldwide, was the No 2 story, receiving 49 first-place votes. The precipitous rise and fall of oil prices was No 3.

The top story of 2007 was the massacre of 32 people at Virginia Tech University by a mentally disturbed student gunman.

Four recruiter suicides lead to Army probe

HENDERSON, 23 Dec—Sgt 1st Class Patrick Henderson, a strapping Iraq combat veteran, spent the last, miserable months of his life as an Army recruiter, cold-calling dozens of people a day from his strip-mall office and sitting in strangers’ living rooms, trying to sign up their sons and daughters for an unpopular war.

He put in 13-hour days, six days a week, often counting abuse from young people or their parents. When he and other recruiters would gripe about the pressure to meet their quotas, their superiors would snarl that they ought to be grateful they were not in Iraq, according to his widow.

Less than a year into the job, Henderson—a fixture by flashbacks and sleeplessness after his tour of battle in Iraq—went into his backyard shed, slid the chain lock in place, and hanged himself with a dog chain.

He became, at age 35, the fourth member of the Army’s Houston Recruiting Battalion to commit suicide in the past three years—something Henderson’s widow and others blame on the psychological scars of combat, combined with the pressure-cooker job of trying to sell the war.

A man looks at burnt military vehicles in a compound on the outskirts of Peshawar on 15 Dec, 2008. Many Pakistani truckers have halted taking supplies to Western forces in Afghanistan because of an upsurge in militant attacks on goods and equipment trucked through Pakistan, transport company officials said on Monday.
Pakistan rocked by a violent area of northwest

Two soldiers, 15 militants killed in Pakistan’s Swat valley

Two, killed, two hurt in Dallas-area road shootings, suspect sought

Iraqi Parliament delays vote on foreign troops
Schwarzenegger warns of deepening crisis facing California

LOS ANGELES, 23 Dec—California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on Monday warned of a deepening crisis in the state due to legislature’s failure to pass a real and comprehensive budget solution. “Due to the legislature’s continued failure to provide a real and comprehensive budget solution, 2,000 infrastructure projects in California valued at more than 16 billion dollars are in jeopardy and tens of thousands of California jobs are immediately at risk,” the governor said in a statement. California, the most populous state in the nation, is 14.8 billion dollars in the red, and the budget deficit is projected to grow to nearly 42 billion dollars in 18 months. Schwarzenegger has declared a fiscal emergency, called the Legislature into a special session to find ways to cut spending and raise revenue, and issued an executive order that could result in unpaid furloughs for state workers. Last week Schwarzenegger rejected tax increases and cuts in state services that Democrats got through the Assembly. “Last week the legislature asked Californians to pay higher taxes and fees without making a real attempt to put Californians back to work and help them keep their homes,” the governor said. —INTERNET

Russian political situation remains stable under Medvedev-Putin rule

MOSCOW, 23 Dec—Russia underwent a smooth transfer of power in 2008, with former President Vladimir Putin stepping down and his handpicked successor Dmitry Medvedev taking over. The new system of power seemed to function well during the past several months in spite of the Cauca- us crisis, NATO’s eastward expansion and the global financial crisis. The new head of state has continued the policies of his predecessor, whose eight-year presidency was characterized by a booming economy and political stability at home. Medvedev, the former first deputy prime minister, was sworn in as Russia’s new president in May, succeeding his long-time mentor two months after an overwhelming victory in the country’s presidential election. At Medvedev’s inauguration ceremony, Putin called on the entire nation to support the new president and firmly advance along the path of national development. Meanwhile, Medvedev repeatedly pledged adherence to Putin’s policies, which have “set up strong foundations for long-term development, for decades,”—Xinhua

Heavy security presence to secure Philippine airport during holiday season

MANILA, 23 Dec—A 6,000-strong security team, composed of the air forces and police, has been deployed to secure the safety of the Philippines’ airport in Metro Manila as tens of thousands of travelers are expected to visit the archipelago during the Christmas season, local media reported Tuesday. The assistant general manager for security of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Angel Atutubo said they have stepped up their security measures especially since the number of travelers at the NAIA had gone up to between 22,000 and 25,000 from the usual peak season flow of 18,000 to 20,000 people, the on-line news network GMA News said. —Xinhua

Mexico to hold national contest for pavilion design in Shanghai Expo

MEXICO CITY, 23 Dec—The Mexican state-owned institution ProMexico on Monday announced arrangement for a national contest to select designs for the pavilion of Mexico at Shanghai World Expo scheduled for 1 May to 31 Oct, 2010. Shanghai World Expo, with the theme of “Better City, Better Life,” will host at least 79 million people from 210 countries to analyze problems in the cities and their possible solutions. ProMexico, the federal organization promoting Mexican exports, is special for coordinating Mexico’s participation in the Expo.—Xinhua

All items from Xinhua News Agency

China launches new geostationary weather satellite

BEIJING, 23 Dec—China launched its third geostationary meteorological satellite, the Fengyun-2-06, Tuesday morning. The satellite was launched on a Long March-3A carrier rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwestern Sichuan Province at 8:54 am (Beijing Time). It entered the preset orbit 24 minutes later. The 1,390-kilogram satellite, developed by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology affiliated to the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation, was able to acquire data from the ground, the ocean and space for the China Meteorological Administration (CMA). Its predecessors, Fengyun-2-04 and -05, was launched in 2004 and 2006 respectively. The Fengyun-2-06 was to become a successor to boost the stability of the satellite series and would play an important role in weather forecast for China and neighboring countries and in disaster reduction, said the CMA.—Xinhua

China’s third geostationary meteorological satellite, the Fengyun-2-06, is launched on a Long March-3A carrier rocket at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China’s Sichuan Province, on 23 Dec, 2008.—Xinhua

German warship to leave for anti-piracy mission off Somali

BERLIN, 23 Dec—German Navy frigate, the Karlsruhe, is set to leave the German base in Djibouti on Tuesday to join European Union’s anti-piracy mission off Somali, German news agency DPA reported on Monday. On Monday, Vice-Admiral Hans-Joachim Stricker and German Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung visited the crew of the Karlsruhe before their departure for Somalia. “When I look at the EU operational plan to deploy ships and aircraft, I am confident we can fulfill the requirements,” Stricker said. Stricker said Germany had a fundamental interest in “safe sea-lanes to secure free trade on international markets.”—Xinhua

Travelers stand in an hours-long line to re-book canceled flights at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on 22 Dec, 2008 in Seattle. A series of storms has stranded thousands of people at the airport and many people have been unable to book replacement flights for several days.—INTERNET

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Russia warns of gas supply disruptions to Europe

MOSCOW, 23 Dec—Russia raised the spectre of gas cuts to Europe over the winter, warning on Monday that it did not rule out supply disruptions as a result of a dispute with Ukraine over non-payment of debts. “It is not ruled out that the current position of the Ukrainian side and some of its actions could lead to disruptions in the stability of gas supplies to Europe,” First Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov said in a statement.

Russian energy giant Gazprom maintains that Ukraine’s state gas company Naftogaz owes it up to 2.4 billion dollars (1.8 billion euros) in debts and has warned of delivery cuts if the outstanding debt is not cleared.

Ukraine is a major transit country for Russian gas exports to the European Union and a dispute over gas prices led to a brief interruption of gas supplies in several EU countries in January 2006. —Internet

Six Russian tourists killed, 17 injured in Egypt road accident

CAIRO, 23 Dec—At least six Russian tourists were killed and 17 others injured in a bus crash in the Egyptian Sinai peninsula on Monday, the state MENA news agency reported.

The bus carrying the Russian tourists overturned about 10 km away from the South Sinai resort town of Dahab, said the report. The wounded were rushed to hospitals in Dahab and Sharm el-Sheikh, the Red Sea coast in Sinai, said the report, adding that an investigation was underway for the cause of the accident. Traffic accidents are common in Egypt with an estimated annual death toll of some 6,000 people. —Internet

Saudi university to house one of world’s largest supercomputers

The new university will offer research in biosciences and bioengineering, material sciences and engineering, applied mathematics and computational sciences.

A new science and technology university in Saudi Arabia will house one of the world’s largest supercomputers and it is helping lure top researchers to Islamic state. The King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) opened next year on the Red Sea coast near Jeddah.

“The supercomputer is the cornerstone of this knowledge-based economy that we are seeking,” said Majid Al-Ghusain, in charge of the acquisition, design and development of the “Shaheen” supercomputer.

Named after the peregrine fal-con, which reaches speeds of up to 340 kilometres per hour, Shaheen is expected to reach 222 teraflops, a measure equalling a trillion floating point operations per second, Ghusain said. This will make it sixth most powerful computer in the world.

NYC cable TV guy shows up on time in 2009 calendar

There’s no need to wait around for the cable guy in New York. He’s right there all year in a new playful calendar.

Time Warner Cable Inc is putting out the tongue-in-cheek item featuring its technicians and call centre representatives posing while having fun.

Mr January grins while connecting cables for three admiring passengers. Mr February forgot to button his shirt before delivering a bunch of cables formed into flowers.

And Ms September plucks remote controls from a tree as if they were fruit. Technician Kevin Mayers says he loves the attention he’s getting after posing as Mr August. Some of the company’s female workers also got into the act.

Iranian 19-year-old girl world’s youngest professor

Alia Sabur, an American citizen of Iranian origin, is accustomed to raising people’s eyebrows.

The child prodigy from Northport enrolled at Stony Brook University at age 10 and played clarinet with the Rockland Symphony Orchestra at 11.

That happened last month, when the venerated publication named Sabur the world’s youngest college professor.

“It’s no surprise if you take a look at her life: The child prodigy from Northport enrolled at Stony Brook University in America at age 10 and played clarinet with the Rockland Symphony Orchestra at 11.

When the New York child genius was 14 she earned her bachelor’s degree.

Olmert arrives in Turkey to advance Israeli-Syrian peace talks

ANKARA, 23 Dec—Israel Prime Minister Ehud Olmert arrived in the Turkish capital of Ankara on Monday for a working visit to advance the peace talks between Israel and Syria. Olmert is expected to meet his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the two leaders will discuss various issues, including the Israeli-Syrian peace talks and the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

Turkey has been mediating peace talks between Israel and Syria, but Israeli lawmakers have repeatedly stated that the talks should be put on hold until a new government is formed after the February parliamentary election.

Before an election, Olmert, who is eager to show progress in the diplomatic process with Syria before his term in office comes to an end, will remain in power as caretaker premier.

Four rounds of Turkey-brokered negotiations between Israel and Syria have been carried out since the three sides confirmed in mid-May the renewal of the peace process. Yet a fifth round, originally planned in September, has been on hold due to Israel’s political turmoil.

On Thursday, local daily Haaretz reported on its website that Defense Minister Ehud Barak has said that he is working to advance peace talks with Syria.

“I am taking action to advance peace in the real world, not in an imaginary one. I am active more than anyone else in trying to reach peace with Syria,” said Barak in a special interview with Haaretz. —Internet

Bomb hoax forces Aeroflot plane to land

ATHENS, 23 Dec—A bomb hoax forced an Aeroflot plane to return Monday to Athens International Airport, Greek authorities said.

The Russian airline’s Flight 296 to Moscow returned to Athens and landed at 2:18 pm (1218GMT), a little over an hour after takeoff, following a threat by an anonymous telephone caller. But police said nothing was found on the aircraft or in the passengers’ luggage.

Officials said 49 passengers were on board the plane, which was scheduled to depart again for Moscow shortly after midnight (2200GMT). —Internet

Firemen in protective gear work at the scene after a suspect package was sent to the US embassy in Cyprus in Nicosia on 22 Dec, 2008. —Internet

This is an artist’s reconstruction of the extinct amphibian Gerrothorax pulcherremitis lifting its head to open its gaping mouth. The peculiar amphibian, clad in bony armor, prowled warm lakes 210 million years ago in what is now Greenland, catching fish with one of the most unusual bites in the history of life on Earth. While other vertebrate animals open their mouths by dropping their lower jaw, this one did so by lifting back the top of its head in a way that looked a lot like lifting the lid of a toilet seat.

Alia Sabur, 19, was announced the youngest full-time college professor in history by the Guinness Book of World Records, media reported.
MraukU with booming agricultural farming and hotel service

Article: Reporter Singu Soe Win; Photos: Tin Soe (Myanma Alin)

MraukU Township Development Affairs Committee upgrades a road to a tarred one.

The regions along the Laymyo River in MraukU Township have launched triple-cropping pattern of vegetables with the use of small water-pumping machines and advanced agricultural methods. So, local farmers of these regions are doing very well in their agricultural farming, and have luxurious goods such as TV sets, motorcyles, and CDMA mobile phones.

U Than Naing, in-charge of the auto-exchange phone station of Township Myanmar Posts and Telecommunications, said the station had 260 semi-auto telephones of E-PABX system and 15 reinforced type will be 70 feet long and 32 feet wide with two four-foot-wide walkways on it. It will be able to withstand 60 tons of loads and its clearance area will be 60 feet wide and five feet high. It is designed for convenience of people travelling between MraukU and Sittway and between MraukU and Taungup all-year round. Now, the project has been completed by 80 per cent. And the group will carry on building the 90-foot Myaung Bridge in Minbya Township, Shantaung Bridge in MraukU Township, and 60-foot Pazintaung Bridge in Kyauktaw Township.

Since 1988, the Ministry of Construction has constructed 26 bridges of above 100 feet, eight bailey bridges, two wooden bridges, 12 concrete bridges, three steel girder bridges, and one bailey suspension bridge on An-Sittway road section for generating regional development and enhancing amicable relations between local national brethren.

Officials of the Township Development Affairs Committee briefed us on a programme to issue licences for 35 decorated coaches for foreign tourists and 660 trishaws for local people. It also has many ongoing road and bridge projects.

Manager U Aung Myo Thein of the MraukU Hotel said that MraukU Township has several luxurious hotels and two private-owned lodging houses.

The MraukU Princess Hotel of traditional style is located on a 38-acre land near the Theingar Nadi River and its staff members are of various national races. Therefore, these points make it clear that the government is taking measures in various sectors for development of Rakhine State.

Translation: MS Myanma Alin:

23-12-2008
Commander inspects road work in Monywa

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec — Chairman of Sagaing Division Peace and Development Council Commander of North-West Command Maj-Gen Myint Soe inspected progress of construction of 4400-foot long gravel road at the corner of Kanna and Bogyoke roads in Monywa yesterday.

The commander looked into extension of Kanna road and gave necessary instructions.

Next, the commander delivered an address at coordination meeting of Sagaing Division PDC and departmental officials at Myathala hall in Monywa. MNA

A&I Minister inspects agriculture works in Meiktila District

YANGON, 23 Dec — Minister for Agriculture and Irrigation Maj-Gen Htay Oo inspected thriving Ngwechi-6 late monsoon long staple cotton plantation of Farmers U Myint Thein and U Soe Maung with the use of underground tapping water at Tawma village in Meiktila Township, Mandalay Division yesterday.

Myanmar Cotton and Sericulture Enterprise is providing new high yielding Ngwetchi-6 cotton strains and methods in order to maximize per acre yield in all regions where cotton is grown. In Meiktila District, the enterprise is implementing the plan to produce 1100 viss and above per acre in cooperation with the cotton growers in the region.

Next, the minister looked into Paukyoe dam being repaired by Irrigation Department at Natgyi Ywathit village in Myar village-tract in the township.

The dam is one of the small dams and lakes being repaired under special project for Yamethin and Meiktila Districts. Upon completion, it will resume irrigation of farmland, supply of water, and greening nearby regions. — MNA

The wise one dispels intoxication through non-intoxication

When the wise one dispels intoxication through non-intoxication, he having ascended the tower of wisdom — being himself free from sorrow and being himself wise — looks at the sorrowing people and the unwise as one, standing on a mountain, views those on the plains.

Dhammapada-28

ASEC delegation visits Mandalay

YANGON, 23 Dec—Under the ASEAN Schools Tour 2008, an ASEAN delegation led by Dr Termsak Chalermpalamupap visited No. (2) Basic Education High School in Chanaye Thazan Township, Mandalay yesterday morning.

At the opening of ASEAN Schools Tour 2008, Principal of the school Dr Aung Thet Swe extended greetings. Director-General of No. (2) Basic Education Department U Aye Lwin delivered a speech.

A video film on ASEAN Community was shown to the attenders. Pop Quizzes programme was held for students. Dr Termsak Chalermpalamupap gave an address, followed by ASEAN Quiz.

The students who won prizes in ASEAN painting and poster contests recounted their experiences. ASEAN Countries programme took place.

The director-general presented gifts to the delegation leader and members. The delegation leader presented a basket of flowers to the entertainers. — MNA

Industry-1 Minister inspects factories and Winthuza shops in Magway

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec — Minister for Industry-1 U Aung Thaung looked into production process of Textile Factory (Pwintbyu) of Myanmar Textile Industry in Pwintbyu, Magway Division on 21 December.

After hearing reports presented by the managing director and the factory manager, the minister left instructions on growing of wind break for greening the factory area and extended cultivation of cotton at the vacant lands owned by the factory.

Next, the minister visited Winthuza Shop (Pwintbyu), Winthuza Shop in Magway and Soft Drink Factory (Magway) and gave necessary instructions. The minister also visited Soap Factory (Magway) and inspected storage of Ngwechi-6 cotton at Taungdwingyi Cotton Mill.

Yesterday, the Minister visited horse breeding project (Yanpe) and corn product plant (Yanpe) near Payatkyai village in Taungdwingyi Township.

In Aunglan Township, the minister inspected picking of cotton at a field. — MNA

The ceremony to mark opening of ASEAN Schools Tour 2008 in progress at BEHS No. 2 in Chanaye Thazan Township. — MNA
Second round matches of Defence Services C-in-C's Trophy (Army, Navy and Air) Football Tournament continue

YANGON, 23 Dec—The second round matches of the 47th Defence Services Commander-in-Chief’s Trophy (Army, Navy and Air) Football Tournament continued in Mandalay today.

In AA group, Camp-Commandant Office of the Ministry of Defence team and South-East Command team played 1-1 draw in Batoon playground. In another match, Northern Command team beat Yangon Command team 6-2 at Aungmyay Mandalay playground in Mandalay.

Minister looks into sub-power stations

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—Minister for Electric Power No.2 Maj-Gen Khin Maung Myint looked into control room, battery room and switch yard at Shwesaryan sub-power station in Mandalay Division on 20 December. After he had inspected Sagaing District Power station in Mandalay yard at Shwesaryan sub-battery room and switch office, he met with officials at Electrical Engineer’s Office, he met with service personnel there. The minister and party went on an inspection tour of Sintat bank and Letpanphyu bank where pylons will be built crossing Ayeyawady river through Ontaw sub-power station.

North of the association here yesterday, attended by Patron of the association U Khin Nyein and Secretary of the association U Than Nyein and Secretary of the association U Khin Maung Aye reported on banking services to the minister.

Minister and party visited Myinmu Township Electrical Engineer’s Office and went on an inspection tour of Myonwa bank and Nyaungbyingyi bank where Ontaw-Nyaungbyingyi 230KV pylon will be built crossing Chindwin river.—MNA

Workshop on development of rice production and sales organized

YANGON, 23 Dec—Jointly organized by Banks Supervisory Committee and Myanmar Banks Association, the 106th Executive Board Meeting was held at the association here yesterday, attended by Patron of the association U Win Myint and CEC Tin Naing Thein, for Commerce Brig-Gen Khin Maung Myint.

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—Minister for Industry-2 Vice-Admiral Soe Thein met with officials at Mayangon Rubber Farm in Belin Township on 21 December and left instructions on growing and production of rubber.

At the briefing hall of Radial Tyre Factory construction project, the minister heard reports on progress of construction works and works being carried out for ensuring supply of water and electricity presented by in-charge of the project and gave instructions on timely completion of construction works meeting set standards, and inspected project area.

Next, the minister went to No 1 Tyre and Rubber Factory (Thatlon). After hearing reports on sales of products of the factory, purchase of raw materials and financial and management matters presented by general manager of the factory, the minister stressed the need to produce tyres of good quality and to use effective ways and means for cost management.—MNA

Notice to mariners issued

YANGON, 23 Dec—MPRL E&P Pte Limited that is undertaking joint venture tasks in oil exploration work together with Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise will conduct 2D Marine Seismic Acquisition Survey at No A-6 Block of Rakhine offshore by MV Pacific Sword from 19 January to 6 February, 2009.

The survey task will be conducted at Point-A between north latitude 16 degrees 45 minutes 00 second and east longitude 93 degrees 21 minutes 00 second, Point-B between north latitude 17 degrees 30 minutes 00 second and east longitude 93 degrees 21 minutes 00 second, Point-C north latitude 17 degrees 30 minutes 00 second and east longitude 94 degrees 31 minutes 00 second, Point-D north latitudes 16 degrees 45 minutes 00 second and east longitude 94 degrees 21 minutes 00 second. While conducting the survey, the mariner’s notice was issued for various sizes of watercrafts not to pass through the 4 square kilometres area of the A-6 Block.—MNA

Review of health care services in aftermath of Nargis Storm held

NAY PYI TAW, 23 Dec—The Ministry of Health reviewed health care services in the aftermath of Nargis Storm at the ministry here at 9 am yesterday.

Deputy Minister for Health Dr Mya Oo made an opening speech. Officials briefed on health care services for those affected by the storm to the Deputy Minister.—MNA

Fire in Hlinethaya

YANGON, 23 Dec — A fire broke out at the rice warehouse of proprietor of flour mill of Diamond Star Co in Industrial Zone-2 in Hlinethaya Township at 10.50 a.m. on 21 December.

The wire connecting a generator and the warehouse had short-circuited. The fire was brought under control at 00.10 a.m. on 22 December. Bags of rice, buildings and ten motor cycles were burnt out.—MNA
Kankalay Water Pumping Station in Hmawby Township to irrigate 4500 acres of farmlands

The Water Resources Utilization Department under the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, in its bid to put into reality one of the five rural development programmes “water supply to rural areas”, is implementing water pumping projects and river water pumping projects in Hmawby, Hlegu and Mingaladon townships in Yangon Division.

Myaungdagar Water Pumping Project was launched with the use of water from the Myaungdagar Creek near Myaungdagar Village in Hmawby Township in 2005-2006 fiscal year and finished in 2006-2007 fiscal year.

The waterworks of the project pumps water as high as 10 feet. The project has a stage to pump water with the water pumping system of fixed type. Its main canal is 7400 feet long and its distributory canals, 13,100 feet. It has 50 canal structures and five sets of 30 KW pumping motors. Now, it is benefiting 800 acres of arable lands.

The Water Resources Utilization Department began four water pumping projects in Yangon Division in 2005-2006 financial year—Hsinphon Water Pumping Project near Hsinphon Village in Hlegu Township that benefits 3700 acres of farmlands with the use of water from the Hsinphon Creek; Ngwe Nantha Water Pumping Project near Ngwe Nantha Village in Hlegu Township that benefits 1400 acres of farmlands with the use of water from the Balar Canal; Sangyiwa Water Pumping Project near Sangyiwa Village in Mingaladon Township that benefits 655 acres of farmlands with the use of water from the Daninyoe Creek; and Myaungdagar Water Pumping Project.

Now, Kankalay Water Pumping Project is being implemented with the use of water from the Hline River near Myochaung Village in Hmawby Township.

Kankalay Water Pumping Project pumps water as high as 20 feet. It has a stage to pump water. Its water pumping system is floating type. It has a 10,800 feet long main canal and a 20,000 feet long and a 29,500 feet long distributory canals, a lake, three canal structures, 10 bridge structures, 11 conduits to let bad water flow out, 30 conduits for water supply, and six 185 KW water pumping motors. On completion, it will benefit 4500 acres of farmlands.

When Kankalay Water Pumping Project is completed, farmers of Kankalay, Kalagon, Hnawgon, Hle-ngok, Bantbwegon, Bahochan and Myochaung village-tracts in Hmawby Township will be able to grow crops all-year round.

Translation: MS
Myanma Alin:
22-12-2008
4,300-year-old tombs discovered near Cairo

SAQQARA (Egypt), 23 Dec—A pair of 4,300-year-old pharaonic tombs discovered at Saqqara indicate that the sprawling necropolis south of Cairo is even larger than previously thought, Egypt’s top archaeologist said Monday. The rock-cut tombs were built for high officials—one responsible for the quarries used to build the nearby pyramids and another for a woman in charge of procuring entertainers for the pharaohs. “We announce today a major, important discovery at Saqqara, the discovery of two new tombs dating back to 4,300 years ago,” said Zahi Hawass, as he showed reporters around the site Monday. “The discovery of the two tombs are the beginning of a big, large cemetery.” The discovery indicates that there is even more to the vast necropolis of Saqqara, located 12 miles south of the capital, Cairo, he added. In the past, excavations have focused on just one side of the two nearby pyramids—the Step Pyramid of King Djoser and that of Unas, the last king of the 5th Dynasty. The area where the two tombs were found, to the southeast, has been largely untouched. “This means the royal cemetery is bigger than we thought,” said Saleh Suleiman, the archaeologist responsible for the excavation of the two tombs.

Putin says no more cheap gas

MOSCOW, 23 Dec—Russia’s Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Tuesday that the world financial crisis and rising costs mean the price of natural gas is going to rise. “Costs of exploration, gas production and transportation are going up—it means the industry’s development costs will skyrocket,” he said. “The time of cheap energy resources, cheap gas is surely coming to an end.” Russia’s economy is already suffering from high oil prices—the backbone of the country’s economy. Putin spoke at a meeting of a dozen leading economic think tanks and activists that have spiral down in the past months. The country’s economy is surely coming to an end. Putin said Tuesday that the world financial crisis and rising costs mean the price of natural gas is going to rise. “Costs of exploration, gas production and transportation are going up—it means the industry’s development costs will skyrocket,” he said. “The time of cheap energy resources, cheap gas is surely coming to an end.” Russia’s economy is already suffering from high oil prices—the backbone of the country’s economy. Putin spoke at a meeting of a dozen leading economic think tanks and activists that have spiral down in the past months. The country’s economy is surely coming to an end.

Oil slips below $40 as recession cuts demand

LONDON, 23 Dec—Oil prices eased below $40 a barrel on Tuesday, weakened by evidence of falling oil demand as the world economy slows. Final third-quarter US gross domestic product data due later on Tuesday is likely to underscore the ailing economy as a series of stimulus measures and policy moves—including China’s fifth interest rate cut—fail to halt a slide towards the worst recession in decades. The UK economy shrank for the first time since the early 1990s in the third quarter and by more than expected, data showed on Tuesday, with gross domestic product contracting 0.6 percent. US crude for February delivery slipped 3 cents to $39.88 a barrel by 1055 GMT after falling 6 percent on Monday. Volume was thin as traders sought to close out the worst-ever year for oil futures, which are now down about 60 percent since January. ICE Brent rose 5 cents to $41.40 a barrel. The tone was set by US stocks, which fell on Monday, reinforcing negative sentiment across other financial markets.

EU’s new digital library operational again

BRUSSELS, 23 Dec—The European Union’s first large-scale digital library, Europeana (www.europeana.eu), was online again Tuesday, a month after it crashed after being overwhelmed by readers’ interest. “Europeana works again—after we have quadrupled server capacity,” European Commission spokesman Martin Selmayr told a daily news briefing. Europeana gives multilingual access to two million digitized books and other items of cultural and historical significance held in more than 1,000 institutions in the 27 EU states. Soon after its launch on November 20 the website froze, with servers overwhelmed by a volume of 10 million hits an hour.
A car assembly line at the Warren truck assembly plant in Warren, Michigan. President-elect Barack Obama has signaled a major shift in US trade policy with a new emphasis on enforceable environmental and labor standards to prevent a “race to the bottom.”

INTERNET

Toyota to replace president amid business slump

RIO DE JANEIRO, 23 Dec—All the projects of Petrobras, Brazil’s state-owned oil and gas giant, are being re-examined due to the international financial crisis, announced the company’s CEO Jose Sergio Gabrielli Monday.

There will be no change in Petrobras’ scheduled public bidding processes in the short term, said Gabrielli.

However, he did not say for sure that the new projects’ operations will be maintained.

“We will not accept high costs... (and as) we do not know when or how much (prices will fall), we will not contract equipment at its higher prices.”

Gabrielli confirmed the possibility of suspending certain orders, if he considers them to be too high in costs.—INTERNET

Jerusalem dig finds big gold hoard from 7th century

JERUSALEM, 23 Dec—Excavations have unearthed a hoard of more than 1,300-year-old gold coins under a car park by the ancient walls of Jerusalem, the Israeli Antiquities Authority said Monday. Archaeologists said the discovery of the 264 coins, in the ruins of a building dating to about the 7th Century, the end of the Byzantine period, was one of the largest coin hoards uncovered in Jerusalem.

“We’ve had pottery, we’ve had glass, but we’ve had nothing like this,” said British archaeologist Nadine Ross, who found the hoard under a large rock on Sunday, in the fourth and final week of a trip to Israel. “It’s very, very exciting,” she said, cupping hands full of bright yellow coins that looked in mint condition.

Archaeologists have been made to give Watanabe a more advisory role of vice chairman, the daily said without citing sources.

Tokyo, 23 Dec—Toyo Motor Corp plans to replace its president after the Japanese carmaker forecast its first-ever operating loss, a report said Tuesday.

Arrangements have been made to give Tatsuro Toyota the post, which is held by Katsuaki Watanabe, in April at the start of the next business year, the Asahi Shimbun newspaper reported.

Arrangements have been made to give Watanabe a more advisory role of vice chairman, the daily said without citing sources.

No official was immediately available to comment on the report. Toyota, 52, a grandson of Toyota’s founder Kiichiro Toyoda, would be the first member of the family in 14 years to become the company’s president. Tatsuro Toyota was the last president from the founder’s clan.

On Monday, Toyota said it expected an operating loss of 150 billion yen (1.69 billion dollars) for the financial year to March 2009, the first loss since it started reporting annual earnings in March 1941.

Last year it posted 2.27 trillion yen in operating profit. Toyota said it still expected to make a profit on a net level but cut its forecast sharply to 50 billion yen, down from a previous estimate of 550 billion yen. Toyota’s sharp cuts in forecasts marked a deepening of the woes plaguing the auto industry, which has seen General Motors and Chrysler, two of the US Big Three automakers, on the verge of collapse due to the global financial turmoil...

This combo picture shows Toyota Motor executive Akio Toyoda (left) and the firm’s president Katsuhiko Watanabe in Nagoya, Japan. The Japanese auto giant plans to replace Watanabe after the carmaker forecast its first-ever operating loss.—INTERNET

French President Nicolas Sarkozy’s visit to the new car assembly line at the Warren truck assembly plant in Warren, Michigan. President-elect Barack Obama has signaled a major shift in US trade policy with a new emphasis on enforceable environmental and labor standards to prevent a “race to the bottom.”
China ready to use force on Somali pirates

BEIJING, 23 Dec — China warned Somali pirates on Tuesday it was prepared to use force when its navy ships arrive in the Gulf of Aden to combat a wave of piracy that has disrupted international shipping.

It is the first time in recent history that China is deploying ships outside the Pacific, sending two destroyers and a supply ship which set sail on Friday, and the navy’s deputy chief of staff said they would use force if needed.

“When our naval vessels are ambushed by pirate ships, we will resolutely fight back to protect our own safety,” Rear Admiral Xiao Ximin said in a briefing to reporters.

“If the act of piracy is already under way and the pirates are already robbing other civilian vessels, we will suppress their acts, provided we have the capability and conditions to do so.”

Xiao said the Chinese ships would mainly be charged with protecting the nation’s commercial vessels as well as the ships of international organizations such as the United Nations World Food Programme.

About 100 ships have been attacked by Somali pirates since the beginning of the year, and at least one Chinese vessel is believed to be still in the hands of the attackers.

The admiral said Chinese war ships would investigate any suspect pirate vessels and approach them and demand that they show their relevant documents and certificates.

US, Russian space station crew conduct spacewalk

MOSCOW, 23 Dec — American and Russian crewmen installed a probe on Tuesday aimed at tracking down problems with a Russian module attached to the international space station and conducted an array of other maintenance and scientific work during a six-hour spacewalk.

But in a setback toward the end of the Russian-controlled mission, American Michael Fincke, the station’s commander, and Russian Yury Lonchakov had to remove a device they had just installed because of data transmission problems.

A NASA video feed showed Fincke and Lonchakov in their Russian-built space suits leaving the station from a hatch on its docking compartment 200 miles above the Earth.

“OK, going out into space again,” Fincke said in Russian. “It’s good to be here again.” The comments were audible on the NASA feed carried on the Internet.

Russian scientists hope data from the probe installed by Fincke will help explain malfunctions that have repeatedly occurred as the Russian module has attempted to separate from the space station.

This operation is set by Brazilians who bring gold to Uruguay to trade silver,” Ricardo Gil, director of the Anti Assets Laundering Secretariat, said that the smuggling gangs are already robbing local daily “El Pais” said on Monday.

“This operation is set by Brazilians who bring gold to Uruguay to trade silver,” Gil said. In an operation, police stopped a vehicle from Brazil with about 200 kg of precious metals inside the vehicle.

The silver was illegally transported from 1 Jan, 2007 to October 2008, Gil said.—INTERNET

Medical supplies reach cholera-hit Zimbabwe

HARARE, 23 Dec — A first consignment of UNICEF aid has arrived in Zimbabwe to help fight the cholera epidemic which has killed more than 1,120 people, the UN agency has said.—INTERNET
Davis sells NASCAR team, engine company

CHARLOTTE, 23 Dec—Just a month removed from his first NASCAR championship, but hampered by the current economic crisis, owner Bill Davis has sold his race team and engine company.

Mike Held, a California businessman, and Marty Gaunt, vice president at Bill Davis Racing, bought out the veteran owner. The duo said Monday they’ve also taken control of profitable Triad Racing Development, which supplies engines, chassis and bodies to customers from all three of NASCAR’s top series.

Davis, who has been in NASCAR for more than 20 years, won his first championship this season with Johnny Benson in the Truck Series. He also won the Daytona 500 with Ward Burton in 2002.

But Davis lost his Sprint Cup Series sponsor and has been unable to secure funding for 2009. Benson also announced before last month’s title-clinching finale that he would not return to BDR next season.

“When you’ve been involved for this long in this sport and won in all three series, there’s definitely a lot of emotion involved,” Gaunt said. “But I believe Bill got to a point where he wanted to move on.”

“When we told him this is what we’d like to do, presented it to him at the round-table and went back and forth, he got to a point where he wanted to move on this deal.” —Internet

Real close to signing Krasic from CSKA Moscow

MADRID, 23 Dec—CSKA Moscow midfielder Milos Krasic is close to signing with Real Madrid, the Spanish sports newspaper Marca said Monday.

The paper did not indicate its source for the report on the 24-year-old Serbian international, who has been with CSKA since 2004.

Spanish champions Real, who have been plagued by injuries and poor form this season, signed Portsmouth’s French international midfielder Lassana Diarra at the weekend.

They sacked German coach Bernd Schuster earlier this month and replaced him with former Tottenham manager Juande Ramos but are still a huge 12 points behind league leaders and arch rivals Barcelona going into the winter break. —Internet

Hughes looks forward to transfer window

WEST BROMWICH, 23 Dec—Under-pressure Manchester City manager Mark Hughes insists he will still be at the helm come the January transfer window to take advantage of the club’s financial might.

City’s takeover by the Abu Dhabi United consortium earlier this season left them as one of the world’s wealthiest clubs - a point they proved with the British record 32 million pounds (40 million euros) capture of Brazil star Robinho on the September 1 transfer deadline day.

But Sunday’s 2-1 defeat away to basement club West Bromwich Albion dropped City into the English Premier League relegation zone after a run which had seen them take just five points from their last nine matches.

However former Wals and Blackburn Rovers manager Hughes stressed he’d be given assurances by chair-

man Khaldoon Al Mubarak and owner Sheikh Mansour that he would still be in charge at Eastlands next month.

And Hughes said that while he wanted to build for the long-term, City’s immediate plight would see him try to sign new players in January.

“I think everyone understands there are certain areas of the squad which need strengthening and we will look to address those in the window,” he said. —Internet

Terry sees red as Chelsea fail to go top

LIVERPOOL, 23 Dec—Chelsea captain John Terry was sent-off as the ten-man Blues failed to go top of the English Premier League after being held to a goalless draw away to Everton here Monday.

This result at Goodison Park saw Chelsea move to within a point of leaders Liverpool. Everton’s city ri-

vals topping the table at Christmas - and ended a run of 11 straight away league wins for the London club.

Chelsea played nearly an hour of the match a man down after English full-back Terry received a straight red card from referee Phil Dowd for a late and dangerous tackle on Everton midfielder Leon Osman.

But, despite the centre-half’s ex-

pression 10 minutes before half-time. Everton - without a recognised striker because of injury - couldn’t score and the draw saw them stay seventh in the table.

Everton did almost snatch victory late on when Steven Pienaar had a ‘goal’ disallowed by Dowd.

The South African midfielder bun-

elled the ball over the line six minutes from time after Chelsea keeper Petr Cech had saved Osman’s initial shot.

But having seemingly strayed into an off-side position, Pienaar’s goal was then chalked off after Dowd ruled that the ball had been kicked out of Cech’s grasp, with the goalkeeper clearly having two hands on the ball. —Internet

Owen delays contract decision

LONDON, 23 Dec—England striker Michael Owen will not make a de-

cision about his future with Newcastle United until the end of the season, a statement released by his agent said Monday.

While that means Owen, 29, will stay with Newcastle through the January transfer window, his long-term future re-
mains uncertain when his current 103.000 pounds-a-week (155,969 dollars) deal expires at the sea-

son’s end.

But the statement did say the former Liverpool and Real Madrid forward, who is now free to talk to other clubs from 1 Jan-

uary, would consider a pay-
cut if he decided to stay at St James’ Park.

“Following speculation about my future at Newcastle United, I have decided today (Monday) to make it clear that I am committed to the club un-
til at least the end of this season, and I have infor-

mation of my contract situation released by his agent said

While that means

own delays contract decision

Internet

Injured Totti out for a month

ROME, 23 Dec—AS Roma skipper Francesco Totti will be sidelined for around a month after picking up a right thigh injury Sunday in the Serie A match against Catania.

Striker Totti was forced off in the 30th minute and after a scan on Monday morning was told he had a thigh strain. Roma lost the match 3-2. —Internet

World champion Rooney eyes England glory

YOKOSO,MA, 23 Dec—Already an English, European and now world champion with Manchester United, Wayne Rooney is hungry for international glory. Rooney smashed United’s winner in Sunday’s Club World Cup final against Ecuador’s LDU in Japan to complete an unprecedented treble for Alex Ferguson’s side.

Next on the striker’s wish-list is a major interna-
tional medal and he insisted Fabio Capello was the man to lead England to success. “It’s been a child-

hood dream to be a world champion,” said Rooney, named player of the tournament in Japan after scoring two goals in United’s 5-3 semi-final win over Gamba Osaka.

“I knew we were capable of winning all those tro-

phies in one year but credit to the team for doing it. “I love England and it would be fantastic to win some-

thing with the national team. We’re playing really well as a team and Capello is the right man to help us win things.”

Capello has guided England to the top of their World Cup qualifying group and rebuilt the confi-

dence of a side that had hit rock bottom after failing to reach Euro 2008. — MNA/Reuters
Gunmen fire on UN aid truck in Philippines, one dead

MNL, 23 Dec.—Gunmen opened fire on a delivery truck commissioned by the UN World Food Programme (WFP) in the southern Philippines, killing a truck helper in what was the first attack on any UN unit in the country, an official from the agency said on Monday.

The truck had just finished delivering bags of rice to temporary shelters in Muslim-dominated Lanao del Sur Province and was returning to neighbouring Cotabato City on southern Mindanao Island late on Sunday night when gunmen fired at the vehicle.

Two other men on the truck were not hurt, the WFP said. “WFP strongly deplores the senseless loss of life of an individual who was assisting in the delivery of humanitarian assistance,” Stephen Anderson, WFP country director, said in September.

Almost half of the total 60 bags of 50-kilogramme rice donated by WFP to residents displaced by fighting between government troops and Muslim rebels was stolen by gunmen who blocked a WFP delivery truck in another part of Mindanao.

The WFP has distributed more than 4,000 tons of rice, biscuits and dates to more than 70,000 displaced people since mid-August 2008 after violence escalated in six provinces on southern Mindanao Island. Most of the villagers have returned home as fighting subsided in the last three weeks, disaster agency officials said, adding that about 60,000 to 70,000 people remained in temporary shelter areas.

Report says some 30,000 Malaysians oversstay in Britain

KULAI LEMPU, 23 Dec.—An estimated 30,000 Malaysians had overstayed in Britain and the Malaysian High Commission in London was making efforts to facilitate them to return home, local media reported on Tuesday.

The Malaysian High Commission in London was providing information and guidance to these Malaysians as part of its ongoing efforts to facilitate them to return to Malaysia, local newspapers reported. Britain gave Malaysia a six-month grace period in July this year before deciding whether to impose a visa on Malaysians. Currently, Malaysians visiting Britain enjoy six months of visa-free travel. The British Government reportedly has introduced a voluntary repatriation programme to offer one-way tickets for overstayers, including Malaysians, to send them back home. Yet, these overstayers, or illegal immigrants, would be blacklisted and barred from entering Britain for five years.—MNA/Xinhua

WEATHER

Tuesday, 23 December, 2008

Summary of observations recorded at 09:30 hr MST:

During the past 24 hours, weather has been partly cloudy in Kachin, Shan, Chin States, Sagaing, Mandalay and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Night temperatures were (3°C) below December average temperatures in Yangon Division, (3°C) to (4°C) above December average temperatures in Rakhine State and Mandalay Division, (5°C) to (6°C) above December average temperatures in Shan State and upper Sagaing Division, (7°C) above December average temperature in Kachin State and about December average temperatures in the remaining areas. The significant night temperature was Haka (5°C).

Maximum temperature on 22-12-2008 was 89°F. Minimum temperature on 23-12-2008 was 60°F. Relative humidity (09:30) hours MST on 23-12-2008 was 60%. Total sunshine hours on 22-12-2008 was (8.9) hrs apparent.

Rainfall on 23-12-2008 was (Nil) at Mingaladon, Kaba-Aye and Central Yangon. Total rainfall since 1-11-2008 was (110.31) inches at Mingaladon, (120.95) inches at Kaba-Aye and (140.94) inches at Central Yangon. Maximum wind speed at Yangon (Kaba-Aye) was (6) mps from North at (9:30) hours MST on 23-12-2008.

Bay inference: Weather is generally fair in the North Bay and partly cloudy in the Andaman Sea and elsewhere in the Bay of Bengal.

Forecast valid until evening of 24th December 2008: Possibility of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Northern Shan States and Sagaing Division and weather will be partly cloudy in Chin, Eastern Shan States, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree certainty is (40%).

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

Outlook for subsequent two days: Likelihood of slight increase of night temperatures in the upper Myanmar area.

Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Indonesia, Malaysia signs security deal

JAKARTA, 23 Dec.—Indonesia and Malaysia have signed a deal on cooperation and supervision over borders, a newspaper said here Monday. The agreement is expected to relieve tension between the two countries over illegal logging, human trafficking and terrorism, the Jakarta Post said.

The signing was carried out by Indonesia’s West Kalimantan military command and the Malaysian military. “The MoU is a follow up on a recent agreement signed between the two countries,” said Major General Tono Suratman, chief of the military command. The general said the agreement related to the coordination of military personnel in the border areas. Both countries will station two battalions of troops in Simanggans (East Kalimantan), Etikong (West Kalimantan) and Biauwak (Sarawak, Malaysia).

Malaysian army representative Major General Datu Nazelansaid said the agreement left open opportunities for the two countries to cooperate on joint land operations. —MNA/Xinhua

Forecast valid until evening of 24th December 2008: Possibility of isolated light rain or thundershowers in Kachin, Northern Shan States and Sagaing Division and weather will be partly cloudy in Chin, Eastern Shan States, Mandalay, Bago, Yangon and Taninthayi Divisions and generally fair in the remaining States and Divisions. Degree certainty is (40%).

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Forecast for Nay Pyi Taw and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Yangon and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.

Forecast for Mandalay and neighbouring area for 24-12-2008: Partly cloudy.
Just as we left Kyauktaw, we were greeted by the Kissapanadi Bridge, which is clearly visible in the distance and is a real blessing for local people of the town.

From the birth of Kyauktaw to the time of the Tatmadaw government, shipping, main source of transport for local people, consumed much cost and time, thus it was reduced to a less developed region.

Now, local people can travel by car from Kyauktaw to various parts of the nation thanks to the Kissapanadi Bridge. Lists of bus schedules and departure times at bus terminals in the township reflected significant economic growth of local people.

Speaking to the Myanma Alin Daily, Chairman of MraukU Township Peace and Development Council U Tint Naing Tun said, “Our township has a good yield of rice. In 2007-2008, we put 137,220 acres under paddy and got 10,259,848 baskets of paddy, and that accounted for 74.77 baskets an acre. Last year's rice security was 264.15 per cent. Our township is constituted with six wards and 94 village-tracts with a population of 222,040.”

Managers of the Township Myanmar Agricultural Service U Naing Min Hlaing and U Soe Naing said the township had 400 acres of model agricultural farms belonging to 80 farmers; that due

(See page 7)

Talks on Recession Proof Business on 27 December

YANGON, 23 Dec—Jointly organized by Myanmar Fisheries Federation and Myanmar Prawn Entrepreneur Association, Author Khin Maung Nyo (Economics) will give talks on “Recession Proof Business”, sponsored by Han Sein Thant Engineering and Trading, at the Thiriannawa hall of Myanmar Fisheries Federation on Bayintnaung Road in Insein Township at 2 p.m. on Saturday 27 December, 2008. Those interested may attend the talks.—MNA

Earth not center of Universe, surrounded by ‘Dark Energy’

OTTAWA, 23 Dec—Earth’s location in the Universe is utterly unremarkable, despite recent theories that propose toppling a foundation of modern cosmology, according to a team of University of British Columbia researchers.

Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus’s 1543 book, On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres, moved Earth from being the centre of the Universe to just another planet orbiting the Sun. Since then, astronomers have extended the idea and formed the Copernican Principle, which says that our place in the Universe as a whole is completely ordinary. Although the Copernican Principle has become a pillar of modern cosmology, finding conclusive evidence that our neighbourhood of the Universe really isn’t special has proven difficult. In 1998, studies of distant explosions called “type Ia supernovae” indicated that the expansion of the Universe is accelerating, an observation attributed to the repulsive force of a mysterious “dark energy.”—Internet

Kaka inspired by win

MILAN, 23 Dec — AC Milan playmaker Kaka believes his side sent a strong signal of intent to Serie A leaders Inter Milan with their emphatic 5-1 victory over Udinese.

The Rossoneri demolished Udinese to erase memories of the 4-2 loss to Juventus the previous week.

The result left Milan third in the standings, nine points behind Inter heading into the winter break, and Kaka believes the title race is still very much alive.

“Although Inter have a big gap, I believe we can still win the scudetto,” said Kaka, who scored twice.

“This game against Udinese should serve as an example in the new year.”

Kaka also revealed his team were lifted by David Beckham’s appearance at the San Siro. The England midfielder, who will join the Rosseneri next month from the Los Angeles Galaxy, watched the encounter from the stands.

“We really wanted to show Beckham how we play football,” Kaka added.—Internet