Hukawng Valley wildlife survey delayed

A survey on tigers and monkeys in the Hukawng Valley in northern Myanmar has been delayed for security purposes, despite plans for its resumption early this year.

“We have a plan to conduct the survey, but cannot say when we will start it,” said an official from the Wildlife Conservation Society (Myanmar) on condition of anonymity.

“We cannot say the number of the endangered species in the Hukawng Valley because we have not yet entered the forest since 2011, he added.

The number of the tigers and other endangered species are expected to have fluctuated since 2011, the year the last survey was taken, because human-made paths into the forest have been discovered, he said.

According to a report by the Wildlife Conservation Society released in October 2010, only 50 tigers remain in the Hukawng Valley.

Gold mining in the Hukawng Valley Tiger Reserve, the

See page 2 >>
A LANDSLIDE at a monastery in Mayangon Township yesterday left three people dead.

The incident occurred around 9:45am when six workers were digging around a 25-foot high earthen wall in preparation for the construction of a retaining wall.

The three victims have been confirmed as Aye Min, 34; Zaw Min Oo, 24; and Kyaw Gyi, 35.

“Once we got the information, we went there and carried out an evacuation together with firemen and police with the use of a backhoe. We discovered three bodies,” said U Kyaw Zaw, the head of Yangon Region’s East District Red Cross Society.

“The deadly tragedy happened because the workers have no experience in this kind of work, and there are few worksite safety measures in place,” said U Kyaw Ye Aung, a construction expert.

The local police station is investigating the tragedy.

Mayanmar Scouting takes 2nd step for revival

A WORKSHOP on scouting in Myanmar was held yesterday, taking a second step in development of Scouting in the country.

In his opening remarks at the National Strategic Planning Workshop in Yangon, S Prassana Shrivastava, Director-WSB/Asia-Pacific Support Center, said the revival of Scouting in Myanmar will establish a strong movement and the young people will enjoy the Scouting program availing themselves the opportunity of all round development that will lead them in adulthood as a responsible citizen contributing to the development of local, national and international societies.

Myanmar Scouting was one of the founding members of the Scout Organization of Asia-Pacific Region in 1956.

Following the workshop, there will be a program development workshop from 31 January to 5 February. —Ko Latt (MNA)
Use energy-efficient appliances to save energy and money

**Honey Win**

ENERGY management is important for making the best use of it - reducing consumption while making sure there is enough to satisfy all the needs of the country. Myanmar has adopted an energy saving goal to boost energy efficiency and energy conservation, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emission and contributing towards environmental conservation.

On energy management, the official said that ways and means for effective utilisation of energy are needed as just turning off the lights is not the best way to save energy.

**Myanmar** formed its National Energy Management Committee in January 2013 to promote energy efficiency through the implementation of short and long term plans.

An energy saving department was also formed under the Ministry of Industry to boost the implementation process for meeting the target of reducing energy consumption annually in the country.

The department plans to explore effective uses of energy, utilisation of renewable energy resources and alternative electricity usage to reduce energy consumption, power waste and household monthly electric bills.

The department also called for the use of energy-saving electrical appliances that have energy labels and stats on them and renewable energy resources such as wind, solar, hydro and other sources for sustainable energy development in the country.

According to the department technology, experts and legal measures are weak in Myanmar to develop energy efficiency.

Four sectors — industrial, residential, commercial and public building — are categorised in the implementation of ensuring the saving of energy, said the department.

As Myanmar lacks energy auditors and energy managers, we need to learn from experts through training courses, said Daw Naing Naing Lin.

**Among ASEAN countries**, Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia are the only three countries that have no rules and regulations on energy efficiency and energy conservation, she added.

She emphasised the importance of setting energy efficiency ratios and minimum energy performance on electrical appliances in accordance with the law, stressing the need to reduce tax on energy-efficient appliances and to increase tax on appliances that have high energy consumption.

According to the department, the Ministry of Industry is conducting training courses on energy efficiency in Yangon and Mandalay in cooperation with United Nations Industrial Development Organisation.

Plans are underway to heighten energy efficiency awareness among the public in regions and states.

The director called for a switch from tungsten light bulbs that have 40W to 60W to 13W CFL bulb or 8W LED bulbs to reduce energy consumption, lower household electricity bills and reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
Green gram farmers in Nyaung U face water shortage

FARMERS in some villages of Nyaung U Township, Manda- lay Region, are badly in need of water to grow green gram, though they expect to receive water from nearby river pump projects, according to local farmers.

“Summer green gram is usually grown during the waxing of Tabaung, the 12th month of Myanmar calendar,” one farmer said. “We hope the authorities supply agricultural water to our farmlands as soon as possible.”

One local woman said officials pledged to supply water from the Thukaungtal River Pump through eight canals this year, but the farmers have yet to receive the water.

Many farmers from Thukaungtal, Ahtetnyint, Aouknyin and Yanseen villages rely on commercial green gram cultivation for their livelihood.—Kyaw Htay

Illegal timber seized in Mon State

ILLEGAL teak weighing over one tonne was found by police in two taxi cars near Mokepalin Village in Kyaihto, Mon State, on Friday.

A combined team involving members of local police and staff from the Forest Department searched two vehicles near the Sittaug New Bridge road in Mokepalin Village.

Those vehicles were en route from Thagaya, Bago Region, to Kyaihto. They were driven by Hlwan Moe Aung and Than Zaw Oo. Both drivers are registered residents of Yangon.

The team found 0.6776 tonnes of timber in one vehicle and 0.5968 tonnes in the other vehicle.

—Ye Khaung Oo

Rice prices rise in Bago

FARMERS in Phyu Township, Bago Region, have set high prices for rice, even though a large volume of new monsoon rice is now entering the market, according to one farmer.

The Thuka-2, Sinthukha and Manawtun rice strains doubled this year, trading at around K60,000 (US$461.17) per 100 baskets.

Farmers expect to make record earnings from their current rice stocks.

“Farmers will be able make a profit by selling their stocks this year,” said a farmer from the eastern part of Phyu Township.

“We charged just K500,000 for 100 baskets last year.”

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Hlwan Moe Aung and Than Zaw Oo are seen with the illegal teak tim-ber found in their vehicles. PHOTO: YE KHAUNG OO

Crime News

Two men killed in hit-and-run accident

A CAR collided with a motor- bike between mile posts No. 145/7 and No. 146/0 on the Yangon-Mandalay highway, leaving two people dead.

The collision which occurred on Saturday at around 3am in Phyu Township, Bago Region, killed an unlicensed motorbike driver Sai Thita Sithu, 21, and his passenger Wai Yan Phyo, 18, both of whom were from Yashangyi Village.

Police found the bodies of the two men beside a destroyed motorbike. They assumed that a reckless car driver fled the scene northbound along the Yangon-Mandalay highway.

Police from the Zeya- wady Station searching for the careless driver and have filed a lawsuit against him.—Phyu Myint Oo

Car accident kills teenage girl, injures one

A 22-WHEEL truck collided head-on with a motorbike three miles from the northern part of Kywepwe along the Yangon-Mandalay highway in Oak- twin, Bago Region on Thursday evening, killing a girl and seri-ously injuring a motorbike driver.

The 19-year-old Poe Ei Thein, from Wedaung Village in Phyu Township, died on the spot while motorbike driver Kyaw Thet Win, 23, from Weygitaung Village, sustained serious injury and is receiving care at a hospital.

Police arrested the truck driver Hsan Myo Oo, 37, from Aungchantha Street in Magway Region, was found guilty of careless driving by the Kyawlew Police Station.—Ko Lwin (Swa)

Gun, drugs seized in Dawei

AUTHORITIES investigated several drug cases over the last two days, arresting nearly ten suspects found in possession gun, drugs and related substances.

Acting on a tip-off, police searched a house owned by Thi- ha Naing in Dawei Township, Taninhuyi Region, and discovered a loaded gun, 1,436 yaba pills, K117,000 (US$99.93) and four motorbikes from Kay Thi Soe, the wife of the homeowner, together with other three men. Police arrested them on Wednesday.

On the same day, an anti-drug squad also searched a highway bus en route from Yangon to Sittwe and arrested Kyaw Min, who was found in possession of 509,960 yaba pills, K550,000 (US$422.74) and a handset.

On 21 January, local police seized a several yaba pills and over 25 kilograms of marijuana from drug dealers in Mingaladon Town- ship, Yangon. All people involved in these cases were charged under the Anti-Drug Law.—Myanmar Police Force

Yangon Zoological Garden celebrates 110th anniversary

THE Yangon Zoological Garden, the oldest and second-largest zoo in Myanmar, celebrated its 110th anniversary of its founding on 25 January this year.

To mark the occasion, a festival was held in the compound of the garden, located on 61 acres of land near Kandawgyi Lake.

The three-day event offers a wide range of entertainment programmes, including food stalls, puppet shows, circus and music performances, chinlone demonstrations and elephant dance.

The zoological garden is open from 8am to 6pm daily, and admission fees are K1,000 per adult, K500 per child and K3,000 per foreign visitor.

With a collection of 46 species of mammals, 69 species of birds and 18 species of reptiles, the zoo draws thousands of visi- tors annually.

The zoo was founded with the aim of offering students and members of the public to learn about different kinds of animals, as well as plants.

A museum of natural history, an aquarium and an amusement park were also opened for public observation within the compound of the garden.—Ko Ko Nay

Bags of rice await sale at a mill. PHOTO: KYEON

visitors celebrate 110th anniversary of the founding of the Yangon Zoological Garden. PHOTO: KYEON

Visitors celebrate 110th anniversary of the founding of the Yangon Zoological Garden. PHOTO: KOO KO NAY

Visitors celebrate 110th anniversary of the founding of the Yangon Zoological Garden. PHOTO: KOO KO NAY

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Wreckage found in Thailand unlikely to come from missing Malaysian jet

BANGKOK — A piece of suspected plane wreckage found off the coast of southern Thailand on Saturday was unlikely to belong to Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 which vanished nearly two years ago, said aviation experts and Thai officials.

A large piece of curved metal washed ashore in Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Tanyapat Patthikongpan, head of Pak Phanang district, told Reuters. Villagers reported it to authorities for identification, he said.

“Villagers found the wreckage, about 2 metres wide and 3 metres long (6.6 by 9.8 feet),” he said.

The find fuelled speculation in the Thai media that the debris could belong to MH370, which disappeared with 239 people on board during a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing in March 2014.

A piece of the plane washed up on the French island of Reunion in July 2015 but no further trace has been found.

Geoscientists said that while powerful currents sweeping the Indian Ocean could deposit debris thousands of kilometres away, wreckage was extremely unlikely to have drifted across the equator into the northern hemisphere.

The location of the debris in Thailand “would appear to be inconsistent with the drift models that appeared when MH370’s flap was discovered in Reunion last July,” said Greg Waldron, Asia Managing Editor at FlightGlobal, an industry publication.

“The markings, engineering, and tooling apparent in this debris does strongly suggest that it is aeronautical debris,” said Waldron. “It will need to be carefully examined, however, to determine it’s exact origin.”

Other possible sources of aeronautical debris included the launching of space rockets by India eastwards over the Bay of Bengal, he said.

There has been no official confirmation from Thailand that the wreckage belongs even to a plane, never mind the missing Malaysian jet.

“Personally, I don’t think it’s MH370,” said Teo Sari, a Malaysian transport ministry spokesman told Reuters.

District head Patthikongpan said the debris “could have been under the sea for no more than a year, judging from barnacles on it.”

A spokesman for the Joint Agency Coordination Centre, the Canberra-based authority which is overseeing the “international search for MH370”, told Reuters it was “awaiting results of the official examination of the material.”

The Malaysian transport ministry is in contact with Thai authorities to verify the debris, a ministry spokesman said.

Investigators believe someone may have deliberately switched off MH370’s transponder before diverting it thousands of miles off course. Most of the passengers were Chinese.

“Remaining uncertainty surrounding its fate has tormented the families of those on board. Some have said even the discovery of debris could still not solve the mystery.”

The fragment found in Thailand “just doesn’t look like aircraft fuselage,” aviation expert Geoffrey Thomas told Reuters from near Perth.

“It just doesn’t make any sense,” he said. “I don’t think there’s any connection with MH370 whatsoever.”—Reuters

Thousands of Malaysians rally against TPP ahead of parliament vote

KUALA LUMPUR — Thousands of Malaysians staged a rally in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday to protest against the Trans-Pacific Partnership pact as the country’s parliament was set to debate and vote on the multilateral agreement next week.

The rally was mainly backed by opposition parties, especially the Pan Islamic Party, or PAS, and Bantah TPPA, a coalition of nearly 60 nongovernmental organisations that are against the TPP accord.

Their contents range from anticipated increases in medicine prices to erosion of sovereignty and further economic displacement of Malay farmers.

Protestors marched from various gathering points chanting “Bantah TPP” (oppose the TPP) or “Hancur TPP” (destroy the TPP) before congregating at a field known as Padang Merbok in the city centre.

Online news daily MalaysiaKini quoted the police as putting the number of protesters at between 5,000 and 7,000. Addressing the crowd at Padang Merbok, a PAS leader Naussuddin Hassan said the TPP agreement could impact small businesses, especially those run by ethnic Malays.

“We are worried the TPPA will disrupt the country. It will impact small businesses. Bumiputera businesses will not be able to compete,” online daily, the Malaysian Insider, quoted him as saying.

Bumiputra, literally meaning “prince of soil,” refers mainly to the ethnic Malays who make up some 60 per cent of the country’s population of 29 million and who enjoy special privileges through the state affirmative action policy.

Protests over the TPP have many sensitivities because we are preparing to submit to the TPP. That in itself is evidence related to the President Najib Abdul Razak’s government, potentially making it easier to pass legislation by giving it a majority in the house of representatives, news website Detik reported yesterday.

The move, which falls short of an actual agreement to join the government’s multilateral ruling coalition, was announced by Golkar leader and powerful tycoon Aburizal Bakrie yesterday.

“Another problem that should be solved is our position related to the President Jokowi,” Bakrie was quoted as telling a party meeting on Saturday. “As a political power, Golkar was not born to be in opposition.”

“With the ruling National Front coalition dominating both houses, the agreement is expected to sail through in time for its signing on 4 February in Auckl, New Zealand by the 12 member countries.

The TPP agreement involves Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Thailand, Singapore, United States and Vietnam, which together account for about a third of global economic output.—Kyodo News

Indonesian President Joko Widodo. PHOTO: REUTERS

JAKARTA — The leader of Indonesia’s second-largest political party has said his party will lend support to President Joko Widodo’s government, potentially making it easier to pass legislation by giving it a majority in the house of representatives, news website Detik reported yesterday.

The move, which falls short of an actual agreement to joint the government’s minority ruling coalition, was announced by Golkar leader and powerful tycoon Aburizal Bakrie yesterday.

“Another problem that should be solved is our position related to the President Jokowi,” Bakrie was quoted as telling a party meeting on Saturday. “As a political power, Golkar was not born to be in opposition.”

“To side with President Jokowi’s power, we participate with progressive power,” he added, using Widodo’s popular nickname. “Our goal is to participate.”

Golkar, which controls nearly 15 per cent of seats in parliament, has been embroiled in a leadership dispute for months.

Bakrie, patriarch of the family-owned Bakrie Group conglomerate, backed defeated presidential candidate Prabowo Subianto in the presidential election in late 2014. Disgruntled party members mounted a bid to oust him when Golkar, the political vehicle of former authoritarian ruler Suharto, failed to make it into government for the first time ever in the last election.—Reuters
NEW DELHI — Vijay Goel, an Indian parliamentarian belonging to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, has successfully restored a 200-year-old three-story crumbling structure in old Delhi opposite the historic Red Fort.

Situating just behind the famous Jama Masjid mosque and between two temples, the building is now ready to showcase India’s traditional architecture, dance forms, art and culture, paintings and restorations — not the least Indian cuisines — both street food and complete meals — that this part of Delhi is famous for.

The structure is locally known as a “haveli” — a mansion of a unique residential architectural style having historical and architectural significance with different spaces for men and women.

Goel’s successful endeavor may perhaps pave the way for the restoration of havelis to their former glory of the Mughal Empire (1526-1858), which the newer generations can only hear of today.

“My passion for cultural heritage, restoration of old structures and preparing them for the next generations led me to begin this haveli’s restoration six years ago,” said Goel, 62.

“Once I had bought it, around 10 years ago, I thought of restoring it because of its strategic location right in the center of old Delhi’s Chandni Chowk, in the Dharampura area, overseeing many of the important buildings around.”

He added that the structure was in such a bad condition that he initially had no idea how to restore or renew it, and the government provided no assistance.

“Everyone likes to talk about cultural heritage and restoration work, but no one likes doing it,” he said.

Describing his approach, he said the restoration began with the removal of tons of debris lying on the rooftop so as to lessen the weight on the structure.

“Restoring the basic frame of the structure was most important for us, and we successfully gave it a face-lift using modern engineering techniques with the help of specialised masons,” he said. Finding the right kind of material for carrying out the restoration work was not an easy task for Goel and his son Siddhant.

“After much legwork we procured materials from different cities like Jaipur, Sikandra, Dholpur (all in Rajasthan state), Agra and Moradabad (in Uttar Pradesh state),” said Siddhant.

In the restored haveli, there is an intricate use of stone brackets, marble inlays, multifoliated arched gateways, arches, carved sandstone facades and wooden doorways.

It has 13 rooms for tourists to stay in, two courtyards where old dance forms would be performed, and two restaurants for dining.

“Our plan is to also make it a cultural centre to showcase India’s art and culture, dance forms and the like, and also extend a helping hand to those who want to adopt and restore such old structures in the vicinity,” adds Goel.

The haveli’s design is a confluence of Mughal, Hindu and European architecture, which includes grills, pillars, windows, doors and designs on the ceiling.

“Enough care has been taken to give the structure a traditional Indian look.”

In particular, the original “jali” bricks can be seen on the walls inside one of the restaurants which has been aptly named after the specially crafted red bricks.

In order to attract foreign tourists, the surroundings of the haveli have also been spruced up, with tons of open wiring hanging above the streets being laid underground, and a proper sewage system replacing the open drains of old. —Kyodo News

Wife of missing Hong Kong bookseller says reunited with husband in China

HONG KONG — The wife of one of five missing Hong Kong booksellers said she met with her husband in China, according to a statement released by the Hong Kong police yesterday amid growing diplomatic pressure on Chinese authorities to clarify the fate of the men.

Lee Bo, 65, an owner of a publisher and bookshop specialising in books critical of China’s Communist Party leaders, vanished in late December amid widespread speculation that Chinese authorities may be using him as a hostage to pressure Gui Min-hai, a Swedish passport-holder, accused on China state television last weekend, saying he had voluntarily turned himself in to Chinese authorities over a fatal drink-driving offense more than a decade ago.

Police search Japan International Education Institute, a Japanese language school in Nogata, Fukuoka Prefecture, in southwestern Japan, on 23 January, 2016. A man running the school was arrested the same day for allegedly letting several foreign students work longer than the maximum hours allowed by law, police said.

FUKUOKA — A man running a Japanese language school in Fukuoka Prefecture was arrested Saturday for allegedly letting several foreign students work longer than the maximum hours allowed by law, police said.

Suetsugu Ueno, 57, a top official of the school, Japan International Education Institute in Nogata in the southwestern Japanese prefecture, and two other officials of the school were arrested on suspicion of abetting foreigners’ illegal work in violation of the immigration law. Four Vietnamese students aged from 19 to 24 were also arrested.

It is rare for police to pursue criminal charges against language school officials in relation to foreign students’ illegally long work hours, police sources said.

Foreign students with a work permit from the Immigration Bureau can work up to 28 hours a week, but the police believe the school’s officials found two or more part-time jobs for each of those students so their total work hours exceeded those allowed by law.

The school officials are suspected of trying to cover up the students’ illegal work by keeping their weekly work hours at each workplace at 28 hours or shorter. —Kyodo News

19th century mansion in old Delhi restored for future generations

One of the missing men, Gui Min-hai, before they protest outside Chinese Liaison Office in Hong Kong, China on 19 January, 2016.

FUKUOKA — A man running a Japanese language school in Fukuoka Prefecture, in southwestern Japan, on 23 January, 2016. A man running the school was arrested the same day for allegedly letting several foreign students work longer than the maximum hours allowed by law, police said. —Kyodo News

A 200-year-old building belonging to India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party is pictured in old Delhi on 19 January, 2016. The structure, a “haveli,” which is a historically significant mansion with different spaces for men and women, has recently been restored, and is set to showcase Indian culture, from dance and music to Indian cuisine. —Kyodo News

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Lee Bo, 65, an owner of a publisher and bookshop specialising in books critical of China’s Communist Party leaders, vanished in late December amid widespread speculation that Chinese authorities may have abducted him in the financial hub and spirited him across to China for an investigation.

Lee, who has dual Hong Kong and British citizenship, surfaced on Saturday, meeting wife at a guesthouse in mainland China, the Hong Kong police said in a statement issued after midnight yesterday.

His wife, Sophie Choi, told police that she had met with her husband at a guesthouse in China on Saturday and that he was healthy and in good spirits.

The statement cited Lee’s wife as saying he was “assisting in an investigation in the capacity of a witness,” though she didn’t give specifics on the location nor the nature of the investigation, the statement added.

The Hong Kong police said they would continue to probe the case, and would put in a fresh request with police in China’s southern Guangdong Province to arrange a meeting with Lee Bo.

Calls to the mobile phones of Lee and his wife went unanswered.

The disappearances have prompted fears that mainland Chinese authorities may be using shadowy tactics that erode the “one country, two systems” formula under which Hong Kong has been governed since its return to China from British rule in 1997.

One of the missing men, Gui Min-hai, a Swedish passport-holder, appeared on China state television last weekend, saying he had voluntarily turned himself in to Chinese authorities over a fatal drink-driving offense more than a decade ago.

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The Hong Kong police said
Confident Trump says could ‘shoot somebody’ and not lose voters

PELLA, Iowa / ANKENY — US Republican front-runner Donald Trump expressed confidence on Saturday that he could push back attempts by his rivals to knock him off his top perch, saying he could stand on New York’s Fifth Avenue “and shoot somebody,” and still not lose voters.

Nine days from the first nominating contest in Iowa, however, it was Republican rival Marco Rubio who won the endorsement Saturday from the Des Moines Register, the state’s biggest and most influential newspaper. On the Democratic side, the Register picked Hillary Clinton.

The endorsements were big developments for both Rubio and Clinton. Rubio, a Florida senator, has been running third behind Trump and Texas Senator Ted Cruz in Iowa, while Clinton has struggled to fend off a challenge from Bernie Sanders.

Cruz responded to Trump at an event in Ankeny, where he picked up the endorsement of conservative firebrand Glenn Beck, a counterweight of sorts to Trump’s endorsement by 2008 vice presidential nominee Sarah Palin.

“Listen, I will let Donald speak for himself. I can say I have no intention of shooting anybody in this campaign,” Cruz said.

“Beck was more direct. “There is one thing to have a healthy ego, there is another to give a man who believes those kind of things, who has a habit of anyone who stands in his way of destruction,” Beck said. “To give that man the full power and scope of the office of the presidency is something we will grow to regret.”

Iowa Republican Senator Chuck Grassley was an introductory speaker at Trump’s Pella event. Grassley did not endorse Trump but repeated Trump’s signature phrase, saying Republicans have a chance to “make America great again.”

During his speech, Trump called Fox News anchor Megyn Kelly biased and said she should not be a moderator at a Fox-hosted Republican debate in Des Moines on Thursday. Kelly’s questioning at an 6 August debate in Cleveland had prompted Trump to unleash a series of insults at her.

There was no indication that Fox.planned to remove her as a moderator. “Megyn Kelly has no conflict of interest. Donald Trump is just trying to build up the audience for Thursday’s debate, for which we thank him,” said a Fox News spokesperson.

The potential for more chaos in what has been a turbulent race on both the Republican and Democratic sides emerged on Saturday with the news that former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg might launch an independent run for president.

A source said part of Bloomberg’s concern was the problem that Clinton is having in defe ting Sanders. “I hope he runs,” Trump told reporters in Pella.

Beck, a counterweight of sorts to Trump, said the advance, with the backing of Russian air strikes and directed partly by Russian officers, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. It paved the way for a push by pro-government forces right up to the Turkish border, it said.

Moscow intervened in Syria’s civil war on the side of President Bashar al-Assad in September.— Reuters

Iran considers buying over 100 Boeing planes

TEHRAN — Iran is interested in buying over 100 aircraft from Boeing, deputy transport minister Asghar Fakhrieh Kashan told Reuters at Tehran’s first major post-sanctions gathering of global businesspeople.

Tehran has long said it will need to revamp an aging fleet, hit by a shortage of parts because of trade bans imposed by Washington and other Western countries. World powers last week lifted sanctions against the Islamic Republic in return for Tehran complying with a deal to curb its nuclear ambitions.— Reuters

Beijing to spend 16.5bn yuan for cleaner air in 2016

BEIJING — Beijing will earmark 16.5 billion yuan (about 2.57 billion US dollars) to improve air quality in 2016, sources with the Beijing environment authorities said yesterday.

The funds will be used to cut back on coal use and eliminate outmoded vehicles in the capital.

The average density of PM2.5, airborne particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, in Beijing last year declined by 6.2 per cent year on year, statistics with the Beijing Environment Protection Bureau show.

Beijing aims for a year-on-year drop of 5 per cent in its average PM2.5 reading in 2016.

The city government has promised to remove 200,000 high-emission vehicles from the roads and promote the use of clean energy in 400 villages this year.—Xinhua

Jordan kills 12 infiltrators attempting to cross borders from Syria

AMMAN — Jordanian troops on Saturday killed 12 infiltrators in a foiled attempt to cross from Syria into the kingdom, an army statement said.

Another 24 fled back into Syria after they were shot at by troops with the army confiscating 2 million drug capsules that were left behind, the statement said.

The Jordanian border guards acted under rules of engagement to shoot and kill anyone seeking to infiltrate across 370-km (230-mile) border with Syria.

Jordan says it has tightened controls over its northern border with Syria and officials say the army has thwarted many attempts in recent years by jihadists trying to cross from the kingdom into Syria to join a Sunni Islamist-led insurgency against President Bashar al-Assad.— Reuters
Health Hazard in Post Emergencies
Kyan Thura

In recent years we have been exposed to a number of crises that have alarmed the world. Both natural and man-made disasters have taken front page stories in the world’s leading newspapers and TV channels daily. Disasters of both categories inevitably leave human suffering and loss of life. Disasters are events that occur when significant adverse impacts of extreme events to which they are vulnerable are affected, combined with loss of life, and often combined with loss of property, especially in urban disasters. Disasters, commonly leading to emergency situations, occur in diverse circumstances in all parts of the world, at both sparsely populated and densely populated urban regions, as well as in situations of conflict, poverty and poor development in the rural areas. People employ defences that involve the minimum number of casualties and the lowest monetary value of property from such disasters. These defences are used by countries for legal or diplomatic purposes, or in deciding when to declare an emergency or natural disaster area.

The terminology used in disaster management is based on the broad range of situations. The focus is on natural disasters and man-made hazards together as the cause of extreme events, poverty, conflict, (humanitarian, economic crisis, displacement, etc.). An example of natural and technological hazards that have been recognized previously were wars that started in the 1990s in Europe and Africa, the lack of broad employment and lack of employment opportunities in the urban communities. A train might also be an example that causes human suffering and loss of life. Disasters commonly cause emergency situations, both directly and indirectly. Evacuation or other necessary steps taken in avoid or flee from a disaster, for example, can cause disruption of normal life on a scale calling for emergency action. Suddenly, large-scale movements of people within and between countries often produce emergency situations. Dramatic loss of livelihoods and increased spending needs due to destruction of basic livelihoods can place people in a very vulnerable situation. Disasters (natural or man-made) can overwhelm the capacity of a country’s under-nourished health service, creating an urgent need for support in such situations. Emergency situations, local coping mechanisms are overwhelmed and other collective, specialized and other external action is required. During an emergency, it is common to see disasters follow by secondary effects. For example, the primary effect of a mudslide might be that many people are trapped and need urgent medical attention. A secondary effect might be that blocked sewers and broken water mains lead to an outbreak of water- and sanitation related disease some weeks later, or that the loss of livelihoods through the destruction of vegetable gardens and workshops leads to reduced food supply and a nutrition emergency some months later. Human needs for non-material things, such as security and cultural identity, can also be affected, and the psychological and social impacts of a disaster may last many years after the event. Emergency situations are often described in public health terms, with the crude mortality rate (CMR) being widely accepted as a global measure of their severity. A CMR which is significantly higher than the rate in the affected population before the disaster, or which is above 1 death per 10,000 population per day indicates an emergency situation (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002; Sphere Project, 2004). CMRs in the emergency phase following various types of disasters may be many times the background rate for the region or the affected population. Moreover, for many cases the rate of the post-disaster emergency phase may be less than that of the disaster itself. The term ‘complex emergency’ is used to describe situations of displaced livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil discordance and large-scale movements of people, in which the primary emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security context. A combination of complex disasters and natural hazards (e.g. military and political troubles combined with severe weather, coastal flooding and storms and flooding, and a chickens epidemic) was particularly devastating in the 1990s in such countries as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, Peru and Somalia.

The effects of disasters on health facilities, services and infrastructure
One way in which disasters can cause, worsen, or exacerbate situations is through the damage they do to environmental health facilities and services. For example, a flood can damage or destroy water treatment and supply plants, thereby increasing the risk of water-borne diseases and illnesses. Flooding, power failure, broken pipes and blocked roads can also disrupt water, waste and food-handling services, as well as the operation of health facilities, including preserving of the cold chain. Diseases associated with natural disasters are overwhelmingly caused by blunt trauma, crush injuries and drowning. The sudden presence of large numbers of dead bodies in the disaster-affected area can fuel concerns due to the natural disaster, human remain do not pose a risk to the outside world. Breaks the source of infection, more likely to be the survivors than those exposed to natural disasters. Even when water is directly due to communicable diseases, pathogenic organisms do not survive in the environment for long

Debts pose health risks in situations requiring specific precautions such as disinfection of the hands or heat treatment. The management of dead bodies and acceptance of morgue violence is often based on the false belief that the body is not diseased. The body may be dead if not burned or buried immediately.

The body is preferential to collect in mass casualty situations.
• Every effort should be made available in all possible.
• Mass burial should be avoided or all possible.
• Families should have the opportunity, and access to morgue, conduct funeral arrangements suitably according to local social custom.
• Ensure use and correct disposal of protective clothing.
• Use body bags if available.
• Wash hands with soap after touching dead bodies and before eating.

Disaster vehicles and equipment
Dead bodies need to be removed before the onset of decomposition, except in case of cholera, shigellosis, or typhoid fever.

The bottom of any grave must be deep enough to cover the body. If possible, at least 1.5 meters deep. Excellent choice of drinking water, water table with 0.5 m in unwatered, zone.

Prevention of communicable disease
Due to broad range of factors following natural disasters.

The following priority measures in order of importance to reduce the risk of communicable diseases after natural disasters:

• Ensuring uninterrupted provision of safe drinking water is the most important preventive measure that has to be implemented following a natural disaster. The water needs to be available, adequate, commonly used and properly used, to maintain the health of the population.

The provision of drinking water, water quality, etc., in turn, can help 3-5 days of operation, 1-2 days, 1-5 months, and 5 years, to up to 3 years of supply. Typically, the risk of water- and sanitation-related diseases is increased if access to safe water and sanitation is not immediately available or if water and sanitation services are not accessible to the local population. The rapid deployment of personnel and equipment is particularly important for rapid detection of water-borne diseases and attempts to provide sufficient access to the disaster affected area. The risk of water-borne diseases can be mitigated with the following interventions:

• Prevention of diarrhoeal diseases, an important indication of the health of the population, can be established. Mass measles immunisation is particularly targeted towards vector control.

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Iran’s leader says never trusted the West, seeks closer ties with China

DUBAI — Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Saturday called for closer economic and security ties with China, saying Iran had never trusted the West, as the two countries agreed to increase bilateral trade from $30 billion to $600 billion in the next decade.

Khamenei’s most powerful figure told Chinese President Xi Jinping during a visit Iran wanted to expand ties with “more independent countries”, adding the United States was “not honest” in the fight against terrorism in the region.

“Iran and China have agreed to increase trade to $600 billion in the next 10 years,” President Hassan Rouhani said at a news conference with Xi broadcast live on state television.

“Iran and China have agreed on forming strategic relations (as) reflected in a 25-year comprehensive document,” he said.

Iran and China signed 17 accords on Saturday, including cooperation in nuclear energy and a revival of the ancient Silk Road route, known in China as One Belt, One Road.

“China is still heavily dependent on Iran for its energy imports and Russia needs Iran in terms of its new security architecture vision for the Middle East,” said Ellie Gerammayeh, policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

“China plays quite an integral role for both China and Russia’s interests within the region, much more than it does for the Europeans,” Gerammayeh said.

Khamenei said Iran would never forget Chinese cooperation during the sanctions.

“The China-Iran friendship has stood the test of the vicissitudes of the international landscape,” Xi was quoted as saying by China’s Xinhua news agency.

The Chinese state-backed Global Times newspaper said in an editorial on Saturday that China hoped to improve ties with Iran as part of its sweeping plan to rebuild trade links with Europe and Asia and carve out new markets for its goods.

“China is of course considering its self interest in strengthening cooperation with Iran, especially at a time when China is in the midst of expending efforts to push forward the One Belt, One Road initiative, Iran is an important fulcrum,” the paper said.

“Iran-China seeks closer ties with Iran, earlier this week it signaled its support for Yemen’s government, which is fighting an Islamic State militant group, during Xi’s visit to Saudi Arabia, Iran’s rival for influence in the region.

Iran has called on China to join the fight against the Islamic State militant group and play a more active role in the region.

Tehran is widely credited with convincing Russia to start its military intervention in Syria and join the fight against Islamic State.

“Although China and Russia backed UN sanctions against Iran on its nuclear programme, they were also heavily pushing for special waivers to continue trade with Iran,” Gerammayeh said.

“Iran had a relationship both politically and economically with China and Russia for the last ten years in ways that it hasn’t had with Europe. So it’s quite natural to see it opening up first to these countries.” — Reuters

Haiti protesters stoke political crisis while powers seek consensus

PORT-AU-PRINCE — Stone-throwing protesters stoked Haiti’s political crisis on Saturday, a day after they forced the Caribbean nation to call off a presidential election and despite calls for consensus from global powers.

Haiti was due to choose a replacement for President Michel Martelly in a runoff vote yesterday, but the two-man race was postponed indefinitely after opposition candidate Jude Celestin refused to participate on alleged fraud that spread anti-government protests and violence nationally.

Martelly says the fraud claims are unfounded but critics believe he unfairly favoured his chosen successor, banana exporter Jovenel Moise, and some are demanding that Haiti, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, start its $100 million election again from scratch.

Striking a defiant note, Moise criticized the election council for postponing a vote he was confident of winning, and said he was ready to stand whenever a new date was set. The United Nations joined the United States and other major powers that had supported the election in denouncing the vote and calling for a negotiated solution that leads to a new vote.

Soldiers from Haiti’s UN peacekeeping mission patrolled the streets in white armoured vehicles at sundown.

Martelly is due to leave office in two weeks and Haiti may need an interim body to see the country through to the next election, but he and different opposition leaders will struggle to agree on the contours of such an administration.

Iran has been unable to build a stable democracy since the overthrow of the 1957-1986 dictatorship of the Duvalier family and ensuing military coups and election fraud.

Drawn from the capital’s poorest neighbourhoods, the protesters deeply oppose Martelly’s business-friendly reign, which they say was artificially propped-up by foreign powers.

They believe that with him out the way, there will be a better chance of electing a president who will champion the poor.

“We demand the departure of Martelly before 7 February,” said Volecy Assad, a protest leader and an aide to Moise Jean-Charles, the third-place candidate in the October round who believes he was cheated of victory.

“We want a transitional government to set up an investigation commission that will determine the sincerity of the elections,” Assad said.—Reuters
NEW YORK — Oil prices surged 10 per cent on Friday, one of the biggest daily rallies ever, as bearish traders who had taken out record short positions scrambled to close them, betting the market’s long rout may finally be over.

The onset of a massive snowstorm on the US East Coast sent US heating oil HOC1 up more than 10 per cent, helping fuel a 15 per cent gain in crude prices over two days that has reversed nearly half of the relentless, fund-driven sell-off that had pushed crude below $30 a barrel for the first time in 12 years.

“I think panic took over common sense and now we’re starting to get a grip on reality,” said Phil Flynn, analyst at Price Futures Group in Chicago.

A large driver of the rebound in prices over the last two days has been short covering, buying back barrels sold previously at a higher price, as investors take advantage of the lowest prices since 2003. Short positions in the US oil futures and options markets had doubled in three months to record highs of more than 200 million barrels in the week to 12 January.

Data late on Friday showed that some bearish traders had begun taking profits even before the rebound, with short positions falling in the week to 19 January.

Given the volatility we’ve seen in the oil price, even intraday, swings of 3 to 4 per cent, if you are going to see a rebound, this is the kind of rebound you’d expect,” CMC Markets analyst Jasper Lawler said.

Brent LCOc1 rose $2.93, or 10 per cent, to settle at $32.18 a barrel. It was the biggest daily rise since a fierce short-covering rally in late August, when prices had just tested post-financial crisis lows around $42 a barrel.

At that time, Brent gained more than 25 per cent in three days, the biggest three-day rally since the run-up to the first Gulf War in 1990. Some suggested there could be more gains next week as more shorts rush for the exit.

“Markets don’t repeat themselves with precision, but we see potential for a variation on that theme now,” said Tim Evans, energy futures specialist at Citi Futures.

US crude Clc1 rose $2.66 or 9 per cent to settle at $32.19 a barrel. The latest rally is somewhat less impressive on an absolute basis than on a percentage basis. Brent has gained $4 a barrel in two days, a more common occurrence when oil was over $100 a barrel in the years prior to 2014.

Freezing conditions and snowstorms have gripped parts of Europe and the United States, threatening to cripple a broad swath of the US Northeast, the world’s largest heating oil market, with about two feet (61 cm) of snow.

In the longer run, however, the cold snap may not be quite the boon oil bulls were hoping for.

Most in the industry maintained that the overwhelming bearishness of investors and oversupply woes persist.

“The big, big themes globally have not changed, but these are short-term positive developments,” said Richard Hastings, macro strategist at Seaport Global Securities.

As China cuts green car subsidies, automakers’ electric dreams differ

BEIJING — China will maintain plans to gradually phase out subsidies for green energy vehicles until they are fully eliminated in 2021 and allow the market to determine the direction of green car development, Finance Minister Lou Jiwei said on Saturday.

But auto executives speaking alongside Lou at an industry conference in Beijing laid out differing visions as to which technology the market will favor: Tesla-style pure electrics or plug-in hybrid cars currently favored by Volkswagen AG and others.

Green car sales more than quadrupled in 2015 with the market finally taking off after years of subsidies and preferential government activity, leading China to surpass the United States to become the world’s largest market for electric cars.

The government sees new energy vehicles, a catch-all for pure electric, hybrid and fuel cell cars, as a means for China’s auto industry to catch up to foreign competition while also combating pollution that chokes many urban areas.

Lou reiterated plans to cut subsidies by 20 per cent over the next two years and 40 per cent by 2019-2020, eliminating them altogether after 2021 so that the industry does not grow dependent on them.

Tesla said on Friday it should pursue market-based policies. He praised California’s emissions policy, under which Tesla can generate environmental credits from its emissions-free vehicles and then sell the credits to other companies. “We, for our part, see a critical role in the success of the Silicon Valley carmaker,” said Lou.

This was an example to learn from, he said. China has yet to institute a similar system.

Toshiba to sell part of its chip operations

TOKYO — Japan’s Toshiba Corp plans to sell part of its chip business as it aims to recover from a $1.3 billion accounting scandal, three people familiar with the matter told Reuters on Saturday.

The electronics conglomerate has started accepting bids, with early interest shown by the Development Bank of Japan Inc, said the sources, who declined to be identified because they are not authorised to talk to the media.

The state-owned bank has already invested in Seiko Holdings Corp’s semiconductor operations. The sale would exclude Toshiba’s mainstay NAND flash memory operations, according to two people with direct knowledge of the matter and one person familiar with the discussions.

On the block are businesses that handle system LSI and discrete chips, which are widely used in cars, home appliances and industrial machinery. The loss-making operations posted net losses of $3.8 billion yen ($2.78 billion) in the year ended March 2015. A Toshiba spokesman told Reuters the company hasn’t made a decision yet on the sale of its chip operations, while a spokeswoman at the Development Bank of Japan declined to comment.

Following the accounting scandal, Toshiba has been focusing on nuclear and other energy operations, as well as its storage business, which centres on NAND flash memory chips used in smart phones. The Tokyo-based company, which is selling off non-core chip operations, plans to invest heavily in its flash memory production capacity in Japan to better compete with South Korea’s Samsung Electronics Co Ltd.

NEW YORK — Verizon Communications Inc (VZ.N) is in talks with advertisers and content makers to offer sponsored video, such as sports games and music concerts, to users of its mobile-video service go90 at some time in the future, CFO Fran Shammo told Reuters. Sponsored data is like a toll-free line to consume data on mobile phones from video streaming to app activity. Wireless providers bring in sponsors such as brands and advertisers to pay for data usage so that it does not count against a consumer’s data cap.

Most Americans own a mobile phone and a saturated US wireless market has Verizon and its rivals turning to new businesses. Verizon is making a big bet on mobile video aiming to unlock revenue from advertising and data usage. “What we’re trying to get after is for sponsors to come in and pay for the sponsorship to put exclusive content on go90,” Shammo said.

“You’ll see certainly a lot of activity on go90 and sponsorships and advertisers.”

He did not provide details on discussions with potential sponsors and content makers or a timeframe when on sponsored content will begin appearing on go90.

Verizon launched its go90 mobile video app in October and has announced content partners such as the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, AwesomenessTV, the Food Network and Vice Media. Since acquiring AOL Inc and its advertising technology for $4.4 billion in June, Verizon executives have said that its ad-supported go90 model will include a combination of highly targeted commercials, content sponsorships, exclusive content and pay-per-view live concerts and sporting events.

Sponsored content is the “sasis of the go90 model,” Shammo said. When asked if companies such as the National Football League could partner with Verizon’s go90 to bring advertisers and brands to sponsor content, Shammo said “we’re open to anything.”

NEW YORK — Verizon.Commun.”
Massive blizzard paralyzes New York and Washington, 19 died

NEW YORK — Millions of residents, business owners and workers began digging out yesterday from a massive blizzard that brought Washington, New York and other northeastern US cities to a standstill, killing at least 19 people in several states.

The storm was the second-biggest in New York City history, with 26.8 inches (68 cm) by midnight Saturday, just shy of the record 26.9 inches set in 2006, the National Weather Service said.

Television crews were killed in weather-related car crashes in Arkansas, North Carolina, Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and Virginia on Saturday. One person died in Maryland and three in New York City while shoveling snow. Two died of hypothermia in Virginia, officials said.

On the New Jersey shore, a region hard hit in 2012 by Superstorm Sandy, the storm drove flooding high tides.

After dumping about two feet of snow on the Washington area, the storm unexpectedly strengthened as it spun northward and slammed into the New York metropolitan area on Saturday, home to about 20 million people.

Winds gusting to more than 40 mph (64 kph) sculpted drifts many feet high, burying cars.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency, as did 10 other governors. A ban imposed on all travel on New York City area roads and on Long Island, except for emergency vehicles, was set to end at 7am on Sunday. Bridges and tunnels into the city were also set to reopen.

Subways running above ground and trains operated by the Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North halted service on Saturday and were to be evaluated for service restoration at 6 am.

By early Sunday the storm had all but moved off the coastline, with remnants trailing over parts of Long Island and Cape Cod. Much of the northeast was expected to see a mix of sun and clouds yesterday with temperatures just above freezing.

Given the massive storm’s impact, it was too soon to tell how much Wall Street’s reopening on Monday would be affected.

Broadway theaters cancelled Saturday matinee and evening performances at the urging of the mayor, and a Bruce Springsteen concert set for Sunday was called off.

As an otherworldly quiet descended on the usually bustling city of 8.5 million, the nation’s most populous, tourists and residents took to city streets, venturing in the expanses of parks, some on skis. Others built snowmen and had snowball fights.

Authorities in New York and New Jersey halted public transportation and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority took the rare step of suspending operations through Sunday.

About 3,500 flights were canceled on Sunday, with more than 600 already canceled for Monday, said FlightAware.com, the aviation data and tracking website.

United Airlines said it would not operate at Washington-area airports yesterday, and would gradually resume service on Monday. The airline plans to start “very limited operations” yesterday afternoon at its Newark, New Jersey, hub.

The brunt of the blizzard reached the New York City area after battering Washington, where snow piled up outside the White House and famous monuments were frosted with snow.

The record high of 28 inches of snow in Washington was set in 1922 and the biggest recent snowfall was 17.8 inches in 2010.

High winds battered the entire East Coast, from North Carolina to New York, reaching 70 mph in Wallops Island, Virginia, late on Friday, whipping up the tides and causing coastal flooding, said National Weather Service meteorologist Greg Gallina.

The snow also engulfed the Mid-Atlantic cities of Baltimore and Philadelphia while about 150,000 customers in North Carolina and 90,000 homes in New Jersey lost electricity. Accumulations in parts of Virginia and West Virginia reached 40 inches.

Tides higher than those caused by Superstorm Sandy three years ago pushed water onto roads along the Jersey Shore and Delaware coast and set records in Cape May, New Jersey, and Lewes, Delaware, said NWS meteorologist Patrick O’Hara.

Some evacuations were reported along the New Jersey shore. Wildwood, a town of more than 5,000 people about 30 miles (48 km) southwest of Atlantic City on a barrier island, saw some of the worst flooding.

Emergency workers in inflatable boats rescued more than 100 people from homes, said Wildwood Fire Chief Christopher D’Amico.

Water levels reached chest-height in parts of Wildwood and refrigerators and soda machines floated down the main street.

Further north, barrier islands near Atlantic City were also experiencing significant tidal flooding, said Linda Gilmore, the county’s public information officer.

The high tides were set to return yesterday morning.

The storm developed along the Gulf Coast, dropping snow over Arkansas, Tennessee and Kentucky on Friday. On the coast, warm, moist air from the Atlantic Ocean collided with cold air to form the massive winter system, meteorologists said.—Reuters

India’s ruling BJP re-elects Amit Shah as president for second time

NEW DELHI — India’s ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) yesterday re-elected Amit Shah as its president for a second term.

Shah was elected unopposed.

“Amit Shah has been unan-    imously elected as the president of party and will hold the post for the next three years,” Indian home minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh told media. “Only one candidate has filed nomination paper and that is Amit Shah.”

Shah is considered to be a close aide of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has served as home minister of western state of Gujarat when Modi was its chief minister.

He took charge as BJP pres- ident in July 2014, midway from Singh who joined Modi’s cabinet as India’s home minister.

Following the announce-     ment celebrations broke out at the BJP headquarters with sup- porters beating drums and playing the tune of conchshells near the dice.

BJP leaders credit Shah with      the party’s spectacular perfor-    mance in several states and as-    suming power in Maharashta, Haryana, Jharkhand and Indian-controlled Kashmir.

However, BJP suffered badly in New Delhi and recently held Bihar elections.      

BJP will soon plunge into its election campaign for polls in five states later this year.

Senior BJP veterans LK Advani and Murali Manohar Joshi were conspicuous-     ly missing during Shah’s nomination.—Xinhua

Snow shuts down airport on South Korean resort island Jeju

SEOUL — Flights at the airport on the South Korean holiday island of Jeju were halt-    ed yesterday for a second day due to the biggest snowfall in three decades and high winds, forcing hundreds of cancellations, officials said.      

The popular vacation spot off the south of the Korean peninsula, recorded its biggest snowfall in 32 years at 11 cm (4.33 inches) as of Sunday, with more than 1 metre of snow in mountain areas. Many flights were either cancelled or delayed before Jeju airport was shut at 5:45 pm (0845 GMT) on Saturday, when all flights were cancelled until 9am on Monday, the transport-    ingation ministry said.

On Saturday, 296 flights were cancelled and 122 de-    layed. All 517 flights scheduled for Sunday as well as around 60 flights scheduled for Monday morning were cancelled, Korea Airports Corp said.

Roughly 6,000 passengers were stranded at the air-    port on Saturday, the ministry said, but the number had fall-    en to 1,500 early yesterday morning.—Reuters
Congratulation Kanbawza Bank Ltd

On World Finance 100 (2015)

We congratulate Kanbawza Bank Ltd on its being incorporated into the list of ‘World Finance 100’ at the World Economic Forum held at Davos, Switzerland from 21st to 23rd January, 2016. This listing is done by London-based World Finance in England, which selects every year the best and the most successful companies of 100 from among the leading business firms around the world.

The Central Executive Committee/Executive Committee Union of Myanmar Federation of Chamber of Commerce and Industry

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U Win Aung-Dr Moe Mya Mya
Chairman
Dagon Group of Companies
Hollywood producers name ‘The Big Short’ year’s best film

LOS ANGELES — Hollywood producers named “The Big Short” the best film of 2015 at a glitzy awards show on Saturday, which was dominated by talk of racial bias in voting for the Oscars to be awarded next month.

The Producers Guild of America, which is among the leading industry organisations representing makers of movies and TV shows, also named its best animated film which went to “Inside Out,” favourite documentary, won by “Amy,” about the late singer Amy Winehouse, and honored “Game of Thrones” as top television drama. In past years, the PGA’s best film winners have often gone on to win the best picture Oscar, Hollywood’s big prize.

The Academy Awards will be bestowed on 28 February to producers, directors, actors and actresses by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

But Oscar talk has been overshadowed by a cloud of racial bias since nominees announced earlier this month did not include many actors and directors of colour.

The lack of diversity for a second straight year resurrected the social media hashtag #OscarsSoWhite, and elicited plans for a boycott among A-list actors such as Will Smith and director Spike Lee.

“The Big Short” producer Dede Gardner acknowledged the issue during her acceptance speech for the evening’s top award.

“Yes, we have a real problem, we do. We need to tell stories that reflect our world, our country,” Gardner said. She was not alone in acknowledging that filmmakers needed to directly confront the troubling issue. Shonda Rhimes, creator of television drama “Grey’s Anatomy,” also addressed the need for greater diversity, while Producers Guild of America president Gary Lucchesi said the industry must “make a conscious decision to challenge the status quo.” — Reuters

Iggy Azalea wants bejewelled white horses at her wedding?

LONDON — Rapper Iggy Azalea is reportedly planning two wedding ceremonies, and wants “bejewelled white horses” at each one.

The 25-year-old “Fancy” rapper is currently planning her nuptials to Nick Young and won’t be sparing any expense when it comes to the festivities, and is even considering tying the knot twice, reported Female First.

“She is insisting on not one, but two weddings. She wants one in Australia, where she’s from, and another in Nick’s hometown of L.A. She wants 20 bejewelled white horses and a USD 100,000 firework display at both,” a source said.

“She’s insisting on over 250 guests for each ceremony and is also pushing for two honeymoons — one to Fiji and the second to Hawaii. They’re looking at a bill close to USD 500,000.” — PTI

Feels great to see my mother happy with my fame: Varun

MUMBAI — He has been part of seven films in two years, and actor Varun Sharma says he feels great to watch his mother happy with all the fame he has received.

Varun, who was last seen in “Dilwale”, is happy that he has achieved the dream of becoming an actor, for which his family supported him.

“If I am with my family and if a fan or an admirer comes and gets a picture clicked, the smile on my mother’s face is beautiful. I know she has struggled for it, she had the strength of sending her son in an industry which doesn’t give you certainty of revenue or persistence of work,” Varun told PTI. “Now, when she smiles with all the fame I’ve got, it feels great that you can make your parents happy by achieving your dreams which they believed in too,” he said.

Varun made his debut in “Fukrey” in 2013 as the character of ‘Chucha’ and received rave reviews. The actor credits the Shah Rukh Khan-Kajol starrer “Dilwale” for making him a household name. “ ‘Dilwale’ the audience expansion has been on another level. From ‘chucha’ it has become ‘Varun Sharma’ so the transition has been really great. When I went home in Punjab the response I got was amazing. When I meet people they now recite me my own dialogues.”

The actor has appeared mostly in comedy films like Kapil Sharma’s “Fukrey” and Sonam Kapoor starrer “Dolly Ki Doli”. Varun now wants to try other genres.

“I really want to shift. Even though I enjoy doing comedy, I never thought I could do it. Even in theatre I used to do very intense roles. I’ve never done comedy before. But I will never leave the comedy genre because it has given me an identity, love and affection.” — PTI

Oscar diversity campaign may take time but Chris Rock will still host

LOS ANGELES — The Oscars have launched a landmark campaign to diversify the ranks of Academy Award voters who decide which actors, movies and filmmakers earn recognition, but Hollywood’s highest honours may remain a predominantly white affair for some time to come.

Amid an outcry against a field of Oscar-nominated performers lacking a single person of color for a second straight year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences announced a sweeping affirmative action program on Friday, pledging to double female and minority membership by 2020.

But host Chris Rock will not step away from the high-profile job, the show’s producer Reginald Hudlin said on Saturday, telling Entertainment Tonight at an NAACP Image Awards luncheon the comedian had scrapped his material.

“As things got a little provocative and exciting, he said, ‘I’m throwing out the show I wrote and writing a new show.’” Hudlin told ET.

“You should expect [OscarsSoWhite jokes],” Hudlin said, adding “And, yes, the Academy is ready for him to do that.” The largely white, male and older makeup of the 6,000-plus film industry professionals who belong to the academy has long been cited as a barrier to racial and gender equality at the Oscars. “It’s unprecedented for the academy to make this kind of drastic overhaul,” said Tom O’Neill, editor of the awards-tracking website Gold Derby. “It’s a very dramatic announcement and a very welcome breakthrough.” — Reuters
Heavy snow hits western, central Japan, and even Okinawa feels chilly

TOKYO — A cold air mass gripped the Japanese archipelago, bringing heavy snow and gusty winds to a wide area of western and central Japan on Sunday, forcing airlines to cancel many flights and West Japan Railway Co to reduce the speed of bullet trains on sections of the Sanyo Shinkansen lines.

The heaviest snowfall reached as far as southwestern Japanese cities such as Nagasaki and Kagoshima and the temperature in Naha, the prefectural capital of Okinawa, dropped to 8.9°C on Sunday morning, far below the average low for January.

Amami Island, a subtropical island located some 380 kilometres southwest of Kagoshima City, also observed snowfall for the first time in 115 years, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

On Kyushu island, Nagasaki saw 15 centimetres of snow, Kagoshima 10cm and Saga 6cm.

In the Chugoku region in western Japan, where the snowfall was heaviest, the town of Kita-hiroshima in Hiroshima Prefecture recorded 142cm of snow, while Suiza, Ishikawa Prefecture on the Sea of Japan coast in central Japan, saw 59cm of snow.

Shortly after midnight Saturday, 11 cars and other vehicles were involved in pileups on a road in Fukuioka Prefecture in freezing condition amid snowfall, injuring two men, police said.

Around 6am, six teenagers who climbed the 847.5-metre Mt. Kusumobu straddling Fukuo-kka and Saga prefectures called for help, saying they were unable to descend due to snow.

Local firefighters found them near the peak of the mountain and rescued them about 90 minutes later.

According to the weather agency, warned of continued disruption.

On Monday and further traffic disruption.

Snow leopard population, their prey and habitat after retrieving the cameras in order to come up with more specific protection plans for the animals.

Snow leopards, one of China’s Class A protected animals, are usually found in the Himalayas in central and south Asia at altitudes between 3,000 and 5,500 metres.

The animal has rarely been seen in the wild over the last century due to loss of habitat and poaching. An estimated 3,500 to 7,000 snow leopards live in the wild worldwide, with about 2,500 to 3,500 in China. The 8,844-metre-high Mt. Qomolangma, located on the border of China and Nepal, is the world’s tallest mountain.

Endangered snow leopards spotted at Mt Qomolangma

LHASA — Wild snow leopards were caught on camera in a Tibetan county at the north face of Mt. Qomolangma, suggesting that the endangered species also lives at the mountain, researchers said on Friday.

Lhapa Tsering, an official with the Administration Bureau of the Qomolangma, said that the Mt. Qomolangma Snow Leopard Conservation Centre and the Wildlife Institute of Beijing Forestry University surveyed the population density of wild snow leopards in Dingri and Gyirong counties on the north face of the mountain from October to November of 2015.

They found clear images of snow leopards from seven infrared cameras they had placed in Dingri County last year at an altitude of 4,000 metres, Lhapa Tsering said, adding that the number of the animals recorded has not been calculated so far.

A total of 120 infrared cameras were placed in the wild during last year’s survey. The remaining 113 cameras are expected to be retrieved by the end of this month, he said.

Gao Yufang, executive director of the Mt. Qomolangma Snow Leopard Conservation Center, said scientists will research the snow leopard population, their prey and habitat after retrieving the cameras in order to come up with more specific protection plans for the animals.

In the Chugoku region in western Japan, through Monday morning snowfall is expected in the Hokuriku region, where the snowfall was

8th Johannesburg International Mozart Festival kicks off

JOHANNESBURG — Ballet dancers perform during the Viennese New Year Concert at Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 23 January 2016. The 2016 Johannesburg Festival Orchestra and Joburg Ballet on the first two days. Running from 23 January to 7 February 2016, the JIMF this year are scheduled to bring 19

Prime Time

07:00 Pm News

07:25 Pm Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -1)

08:03 Pm News

08:26 Pm Taste Of Myammar (Papaya Salad)

08:45 Pm Aye Aye Soe: Myanma Pioneer Female Bodybuilder

For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule

8:40 pm • Musical Programme

8:55 pm • Teleplay

9:35 pm • Sat-Ka Ma (Magic)

10:00 pm • ASEAN Cultural Fair-2014

10:20 pm • Fashion Show

10:45 pm • TV Drama Series

7:30 pm • TV Drama Series

6:25 pm • Pyu Thu Ni Tr

6:45 pm • Food Trip (Ep-10) (Part -1)

(For Detailed Schedule – www.myanmaritv.com/schedule)

8th Johannesburg International Mozart Festival kicks off

JOHANNESBURG — Ballet dancers perform during the Viennese New Year Concert at Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg, South Africa, on 23 January 2016. The 8th annual Johannesburg International Mozart Festival (JIMF) kicked off here Saturday, starting with two popular Viennese New Year Concerts which are given by South African conductor Richard Cock and Johannesburg Festival Orchestra and Joburg Ballet on the first two days. Running from 23 January to 7 February 2016 and with the theme of “Alta Turca (in the Turkish style)” this year, the JIMF this year are scheduled to bring 19 concerts, workshop and master classes.

Photo: Xinhua

Central areas of Fukuo, western Japan, are covered in snow on 24 January 2016, as heavy snow fell over a wide area of western and central Japan. Photo: Kyodo News

70cm in Chugoku, and 60cm in Tokai and Kinki, according to the weather agency.—Kyodo News

This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.
LONDON — Leicester City went top with a win over Stoke City, title rivals Manchester City lost ground and Liverpool edged a nine-goal epic at Old Trafford, according to Danny Drinkwater, Jamie Vardy and Leonardo Ulloa.

Leicester moved three points clear of Arsenal with 15 games remaining. Danny Drinkwater, Jamie Vardy and Leonardo Ulloa all scored for Leicester.

Leicester’s day then got better as Manchester City were held 2-2 in a lively late kickoff at West Ham United — Sergio Aguero earning his side a point after City twice trailed. What epitomised the appeal of the world’s richest football league, however, was Liverpool’s 5-4 win at relegation-threatened Norwich City.

The victory for Williams, who preceded her onto Rod Laver Arena, was a third successive straight forward win in two hours, five minutes. Williams then swept aside Sharapova’s Russian counterpart in 55 minutes with little fuss.

Her only hiccup came in the first game of the match when the 21-year-old raced out to a 0-40 lead and then achieved the second break to power through the American to take a surprising 1-0 lead.

Unfortunately for Sharapoyan, that was as good as it got against the 34-year-old, who rattled off the next four games on her way to sealing the set in 30 minutes and then breezed through the second in 25 minutes. The victory was the third successive straightforward win for the American, who has not been pushed in Melbourne since her first round clash with Italy’s Camilla Giorgi.

Williams has not lost to Sharapova since 2004, a run of 17 successive victories, and holds an 18-2 career record overall against the five-time grand slam winner.

“I think the person who’s winning could definitely feel the pressure because there is a lot of expectations,” Williams added. “The person who is losing (could think) ‘well, I have lost X amount in a row; I don’t have anything to lose’.

“But in this situation, I don’t have anything to lose because I’m just here. Every tournament for me is just a bonus at this point in my career.” — Reuters

Williams has not lost to Sharapova since 2004, a run of 17 successive victories, and holds an 18-2 career record overall against the five-time grand slam winner. She has spent a total of just 18 hours and 26 minutes without scoring in the opening half of a game at Old Trafford. “You can’t say the fans are not right,” Van Gaal told Sky Sports. “They are disappointed and have a right to boo.” — Reuters

Ranieri praised his Leicester side’s passion and heart as they went from 3-1 to 4-3, becoming crazy Liverpool celebrations.

SOUTHAMPTON, ENGLAND — Charlie Austin scored in the 87th minute on his debut, heaping more pressure on United manager Louis van Gaal. Lacklustre United managed only one shot on target and have now gone eight hours 26 minutes without scoring in a Premier League match to finish 5-4.

Man United stayed in fifth place, one point above West Ham, but it was a depressing day at Old Trafford where United were booed off after losing 1-0 to

Leicester’s Danny Simpson in action with Stoke’s Jonathan Walters during Barclays Premier League at King Power Stadium on 23 January. PHOTO: REUTERS

MELBOURNE — World number one Serena Williams set up a rematch of last year’s Australian Open final against Maria Sharapova after she comfortably accounted for Russian Margarita Gasparian 6-2, 6-1 in the fourth round on Sunday.

The victory for Williams, who is seeking a seventh Australian Open title and 22nd grand slam trophy overall, could not have been in sharper contrast to that of Sharapova, who preceded her onto Rod Laver Arena.

Sharapova was made to work hard for her 7-5, 7-5 victory over 12th seeded Swiss Belinda Bencic before eventually sealing a place in the eagerly anticipated quarter-final in two hours, five minutes.

Williams then swept aside Sharapova’s Russian counterpart in 55 minutes with little fuss.

Her only hiccup came in the first game of the match when the 21-year-old raced out to a 0-40 lead and then achieved the second break to power through the American to take a surprising 1-0 lead.

Unfortunately for Sharapoyan, that was as good as it got against the 34-year-old, who rattled off the next four games on her way to sealing the set in 30 minutes and then breezed through the second in 25 minutes. The victory was the third successive straightforward win for the American, who has not been pushed in Melbourne since her first round clash with Italy’s Camilla Giorgi.

She has spent a total of just two hours, 39 minutes on court since beating Giorgi and sounded a coded warning to Sharapova ahead of their clash on Tuesday.

“I just feel like I’m really confident in my game right now, not against her or against any other opponent,” Williams said. “I feel if I can just continue to play well, then it could be good.”

While her progress through the tournament has been relatively comfortable, Williams said she had another massively motivating factor that could help her up her game on Tuesday. Losing.