POLICE searched a suspicious looking vehicle parked with its lights and engine on near Victor International School in Tamwe Township, Yangon Region, on 6 February.

According to the local police station, the search led to the discovery of a 9mm pistol and 14 bullets from the man in the car, who was later identified as a lieutenant colonel in the Arakan Army (AA) named Aung Myat Kyaw.

Further investigation revealed that he rented a house together with Wai Tha Tun in North Dagon Township. The warranted search of the house resulted in the confiscation of 42 pieces of military equipment, 80 camouflage backpacks, 70 army-green bags and 60 straps, five pairs of night-vision binoculars, 21 walkie-talkies, nine compasses, one GPS device, 89 army-green ground sheets, plastic explosives and a vehicle licence plate.

After arresting Wai Tha Tun in North Okkalapa Township, the North Dagon Township police station filed charges against him together with Aung Myat Kyaw. The search of Wai Tha Tun’s house in North Okkalapa led to the seizure of 330,800 stimulant pills, for which they were also charged.

On 10 February, explosive materials, including nine AK cartridges, thousands of rounds of heavy machine gun ammunition, dynamite, smoke bombs and detonators were found in the house belonging to the two men rented six months ago in Haingthaya Township.

Further investigations led to the exposure of six RPG launchers and shells, 70 cartridges, 254 detonators, two pairs of binoculars and other explosive materials hidden in a building near the prawn farm belonging to the Arakan Army in Rambre Township, Rakhine State.

The culprits admitted that they had transported weapons and ammunitions to Sittwe 14 times in the past two years.

Lt-Col Aung Myat Kyaw of the Arakan Army served under Brig-Gen Tun Myat Naing, chief of staff of the Arakan Army. The AA’s chief of staff was reported to have married the daughter of U San Kyaw Hla of the Arakan National Party.

The culprits admitted that the Arakan Army is involved in illegal drug dealings in order to purchase weapons.

—Myanmar News Agency
Nyaung Chaungtha beach opens to public

Ko Moe

NYAUNG CHAUNGTHA beach, located in Nyaungdon Township, Ayeyawady Region, was officially opened yesterday. The beach is located at the junction of the Yangon River and the Panhalng River. It can be reached in one hour by car from Yangon. It has previously attracted 800,000 visitors per year.

“We set up nets in the water to prevent visitors from entering risky areas, and the people are also obliged to obey the instructions for their own safety,” he added. The site also includes 41 shops. Entry fees of K200 per person and K1,000 per vehicle will apply to future visitors.

Buddhists invited to pay homage to sacred relics

1st Street near Hlaing Yadana Market in Hlaing Township, said Bhaddanta Vicittacara, the presiding monk.

The sacred hair relics, tooth relics etc of Lord Buddha and the sacred relics of the Arahats, namely Rev Sariputta, Rev Ananda, Rev Bakula, Rev Anuruddha, Rev Nagasimha, Rev Mogallana and Rev Sivali are now on display at the aforesaid monastery.

Those Buddhists interested to pay homage to the sacred relics of Buddha and arahats can come direct to the said monastery or can make contact with the presiding monk for enquiries through the following telephone numbers: 09 - 37241707; 09 - 261822650; 09 - 5414091; 09 - 795577179 or with U Tin Win (Sports and Physical Education Department) through telephone numbers: 09 - 3148690; 09 - 2661453162; 09 - 260403523.— GNLM

Antiquities of King Mindon on display in Mandalay

THE bed frame, boxes and palm leaf inscriptions, believed to be nearly two centuries old, that were used by the Myanmar royal family in the Myanmar Era 1200, are currently being put on display to the public by collector of antiquities, U Soe Win Myint.

“The frame is over 180 years old. Evidence of palm leaf inscriptions are still in existence to this day. One can analyse, from studying the inscriptions, that they are about King Mindon’s childhood. I brought them back from Chitthu village in Pakokku township and stored them here at my home in Mandalay,” explained U Soe Win Myint.

Archaeologist U Win Maung stated how the antiquities featured traditional Myanmar handiwork such as the ancient sculpting and craving of objects fashioned on a lathe machine.

“News has been heard relating to the ancient bed frame, but until now there hasn’t been any discussion with the owner, although there is a plan to. The 2015 law on ancient artefacts states they are not allowed to keep these articles in their possession.” stated U Nyo Myint Htn, regional head of the Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library for Mandalay.

The palm leaf inscriptions reveal the name of King Mindon when he was a boy, one Maung San Lwin.

Antique enthusiasts and foreign travellers are currently paying visits to the display of items, while those wishing to follow suit can do so by taking a trip along to U Soe Win Myint’s home, located on 86th and 31st/32nd streets in the Mandalay township of Chan Aye Thar San. — Myitmyaka News Agency

Mandalay Region stores water for El Niño

THE Mandalay Region government has begun preparing for El Niño, setting aside K300 million (US$242,522) to provide drinking and irrigation water to residents through the upcoming summer.

The government has made arrangements to take preventive measures against heat strokes, water shortages and out break of fire since January.

“We have set aside a fund and will spend it to assist people affected by El Niño,” said Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint.

More than 100 people died in Mandalay from heat stroke in 2010.

Meanwhile, the Union government has also planned to allocate K2 billion ($1,616,815) to install water tanks in villages in Mandalay Region.

Despite the renovation of dams and reservoirs over last two years, the region is faced with a possible scarcity of water in the coming dry season.

The regional government is on the alert for the possible impacts of El Niño and is ready to send water tankers to rural areas when needed.

Meanwhile, the government asked people to contact local authorities when they need water during the summer.

—Aung Thant Khaing

Librarian conference

THE third librarian conference commenced at the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in Yangon on 27 February.

The conference was jointly conducted by the Ministry of Information, the Myanmar Libraries Foundation and the Myanmar Library Association.

Cooperatives Union Minister U Kyaw San said that the government started to give encouragement to the opening of libraries in villages as of 2004. After four years, the initiative saw the emergence of over 50,000 libraries in villages across the country, spending K11.9 billion on equipment and infrastructural facilities, the union minister added, calling for the establishment of links with international libraries.

The two-day event included paper-reading sessions and panel discussions. The first conference took place on 22 and 23 March 2014 and the second on 1 and 2 March in 2015.

According to participants, there are 6,207 libraries across the country.

—Myanmar News Agency

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ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat in Vientiane, Lao PDR concludes

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Winna Maung Lwin arrived back in Yangon after attending the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat held in Vientiane, Lao People’s Democratic Republic.

ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat was held at Don Chan Palace Hotel in Vientiane on 27th February 2016. The Meeting, chaired by the current Chair of ASEAN, Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, was attended by ASEAN Foreign Ministers and the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

The Ministers discussed the eight priorities for ASEAN Chairmanship in 2016 introduced by Lao PDR, follow-up to the 27th ASEAN Summit and the effective implementation of the ASEAN Community’s Blueprints 2025 and highlighted the need for comprehensive coordination within each pillar and across the pillars to achieve the targets of the blueprints. The meeting also stressed the importance of upholding and promoting ASEAN Centrality and its relevance in the evolving regional architecture and called for full and effective implementation of the revised Work Plan on Maintaining and Enhancing ASEAN Centrality.

The meeting also discussed ways and means to further deepen cooperation with dialogue partners and strengthen engagement with other external parties for mutual benefit. Furthermore, the ministers exchanged views on regional and international issues, including the emerging transnational security challenges such as terrorism, cyber security, disaster management, climate change, etc. Press Statement of the Chair of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers’ Retreat was issued at the end of the meeting.—MOFA

Dawei building boom brings boon to brick makers

The expansion of construction enterprises in Myanmar’s southern Dawei District, located in Taninthayi Region, means good business for brick manufacturers.

The brick trading market has prospered over the last year, with the price of bricks also slightly appreciating in value.

“In previous years, we fired kiln after kiln of bricks for our customers as they were ordered. This year, though, and the onslaught of orders means we are constantly working, to the point where we have to ask our regular customers to wait,” said Daw Khin Ma Kyaw, a brick manufacturer from Taung Min Paung Village. A brick kiln can produce an average of 16,000 bricks per day, but they take about a week to cool before they can be sold. Brick manufacturers rent out land from landowners and hiring workforces of over 40 workers to operate the brick kilns.

“We’re selling more concrete bricks these days than last year. More people with disposable income are buying bricks. But since it’s the summer though, the price of bricks hasn’t really increased; the rainy season is when prices go up,” said Ko Min Min Soe of Soe Tin Brick Traders in Dawei.

The price of concrete bricks is higher than that of clay bricks, but they sell better as housing construction workers prefer their larger size. —Myitmakha News Agency

Yangon General Hospital prepared for El Niño

YANGON General Hospital (YGH) has taken measures to prepare in advance for the onset of heat stroke victims as a direct result of the high temperatures caused by the El Niño weather front.

The fixing of cooling apparatus within the hospital will be expanded, as will medicine supplies be stored up in advance, said hospital superintendent Dr Aye Ko Ko.

“We’ve carried out plans so that we are in a position to treat patients when they are suffering from diseases we expect to see. We have prepared rooms so that they can be made cool. We’ve also stockpiled the medicine we’ll need. Our preparations start from having ice available to sponge patients in a bid to cool them down,” the doctor said.

Yangon General Hospital has made arrangements in advance to protect against high temperatures by expanding air-condition units, fans and other equipment that protect against radiant heat in parts of the hospital where they are required.

Dr Aye Ko Ko further explained the potentially life threatening dangers posed by the extremely high temperatures brought on by the El Niño weather front if not treated in a timely fashion. These include fainting, high body temperature, fatigue caused by dehydration, sun burns, cramps and excessive sweating.

“The public can take comfort in the fact that the hospital has already made preparations in advance. The fixing of [air cooling units] will make things convenient for patients and those caring for them,” said Ko Ye Nandar, a relative of a patient from Thanlyin Township who is being treated at the Yangon General Hospital.

The Yangon General Hospital has announced that it has enlarged its previous patient and staff capacity this year from 15,000 beds with 3,057 staffers to 20,000 beds with 3,057 staffers. —Myitmakha News Agency

100 illegal guns turned to Sagaing Region police

OVER 100 illegal percussion lock firearms were handed over to the Police Station in Sagaing Region by members of the public during a two-day inspection campaign aimed at stopping the use of firearms, according to the police station.

The firearms began to be handed over to the police station on 20 February, with a total of a 107 firearms being handed over by 22 February.

“It was discussed during a meeting with the local administrator on 16 February that [we] would accept and look after [the firearms],” said an official from the Pinlebu Police Station.

The guns came from various villages in the township. According to the head of the Pinlebu Police Station, Maung Kyaw, who held a meeting on 16 February at the township administrative committee office with the local administrators and clerks of wards and villages in which it was agreed that the confiscation of illegal firearms would be carried out to prevent them from being used.

—Myitmakha News Agency

Appointment of Mongolian Ambassador Agreed

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok, Thailand.

Mr. Mr. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg was born on 23 February 1974. He graduated from the National University of Mongolia in 1999 specializing in British Studies and International Relations. Mr Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg received Master’s Degree in International Relations from the Australian National University in 2008.

He joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia in 1999 and served in various capacities.

Since August, 2015, he has been serving as the Ambassador of Mongolia to the Kingdom of Thailand and Permanent Representative to UNESCAP in Bangkok. He is married and has two sons.—Myanmar News Agency
Loikaw downtown bridge nearly complete

A REINFORCED concrete bridge in downtown Loikaw, Kaya State, is being built by the Public Works Department under the Ministry of Construction, with funds allotted by the Kaya State government. The construction began on 26 December 2014. Now, 80 per cent of the construction is complete, said U Aung Myint Thein, the engineer in charge of the project.

The K800 million (US$646,726) project, which includes a 300-foot reinforced concrete bridge with two lanes as well as pedestrian paths. The bridge can bear 60 tonnes, said the engineer. Construction is slated to be completed by March. U Chit Hla, minister for transport in the Kaya State government, inspected the construction of the bridge and called on those involved to finish on time.—Ko Saing

Wooden furniture loses popularity in Ye Township

DEMAND for traditional wooden furniture is dropping in Ye Township, Mon State, according to furniture vendors. Wooden furniture, which is generally in high demand among newlyweds, is being replaced by steel and aluminium furniture.

“There was high demand even for wooden furniture with simple designs over the last 3 years. Now, the designs have been updated year by year, but the demand is cold,” said local furniture shop owners.

Simple wooden furniture struggles to compete with the steel and aluminium alternatives. However, some newlyweds still buy wooden furniture. The complete set of furniture as a dowry costs K1 million (US$808),” said U Kyaw Swar Soe, a furniture salesman.

The finished product is highly priced because the raw materials are costly. Besides, there is a shortage of professional artisans, the salesman added.—Htet Htet

The demand for wooden furniture is in the decline. PHOTO: HET HET

3 killed in Ygn-Mdy highway accidents in 2016

A TOTAL of 11 car accidents took place on the Yangon-Mandalay Highway in January and February, killing three and injuring 46, according to traffic police.

In 2015, accidents involving light trucks and Hijets numbered 86, leaving 18 dead and 364 injured.

Following the increase in the number of accidents involving light trucks and Hijets, which are mostly used for pilgrimage trips, the traffic police have begun educating drivers on road safety rules. —GNLM

The traffic police distribute pamphlets to drivers as part of efforts for educating them on road safety. PHOTO: POLICE

Crime News

Man arrested for stealing phone

A MAN was arrested with a stolen mobile phone on Thursday in Chammyathazi Township, Mandalay Region, police reported yesterday.

Police arrested 32-year-old Myo Min Latt (alias Ko Latt) within the compound of a special hospital in the township after he was unable to produce documents proving his ownership of the phone.

According to an investigation, the suspect said he stole the mobile phone from a patient, who is currently being treated on the first floor of the hospital.—Maung Pyithu

Fire destroys eight homes in Sagaing

A FIRE broke out in Ymabin Township, Sagaing Region, on Thursday, destroying eight houses, including a two-storey wooden house, police reported yesterday. The fire started in the kitchen of a house owned by U Chit San in Hsintaee Village. The flames spread quickly, as homes in the area are positioned closely together.

Action is being taken against U Chit San by the Ymabin Myoma Police Station.—Myo Min Tun

Suspected stolen vehicle appears in Mandalay

A PLATELESS Toyota Corona Fielder, which is suspected to be a stolen vehicle, was found between 15th and 166 streets and 60th Street in Aungmyethazan Township, Mandalay, on 25 February. According to an investigation, the taxi car was stolen while the owner, Ko Ko Han, stopped it on the side of the Hlang Road in Maha Aungmye Township while trying to find people who called him asking to rent the car. Police are still investigating the case in an effort to arrest the thief.—Maung Pyithu

Police save abandoned infant in Mandalay

POLICE rescued an abandoned baby girl who was floating on the Ayeyawady River near Strand Road between 29th and 30th streets in Chanayethazan Township, Mandalay Region, this week. The newborn baby, whose umbilical cord was still attached, was found alive. Local police sent her to Mandalay General Hospital from Bawgagi Jetty.

Police are still investigating the case to find and arrest the baby’s guardians.—Maung Pyithu

New paddy strain to be distributed in 2017

A NEW variety of paddy seed will be distributed during the rainy season of 2017. The new seed can bear the brunt of harsh weather and yield larger and faster crops.

The seeds will be cultivated in the rice growing season of 2016 as a pilot project, according to the Phyu Township Agriculture Department in Bago Region. The staff of the Agriculture Department in Phyu Township, Taunggo District, Bago Region, held a demonstration on 25 February to explain the benefits of the new seed variety. The event attracted over 80 farmers from 14 village tracts in Phyu Township.

According to the Agriculture Department, the new paddy strain can adapt to harsh weather. Daw Nan Mya San Yee from the Taunggo District Agricultural Department and U Wai Lin Aung, the head of the township’s Agriculture Department, performed the practical demonstrations.—Myint Oo

The traffic police distributes pamphlets to drivers as part of efforts for educating them on road safety. PHOTO: POLICE

Four people injured in Hpa-An road accident

FOUR passengers, including a foreign woman, sustained minor injuries in a traffic accident on the road between Hpa-An and Thaton on Wednesday.

A Hilux car en route from Thaton to Hpa-An overturned when the driver lost control of the vehicle between mile posts No. 8/6 and No. 8/7, near Kawpana Village, in Hpa-An Township. A woman from the Netherlands, who was a passenger in the car, has recovered from her injuries.

Police are searching for the reckless driver and the conductor, who fled the scene.—Tan Tun Htwe
KBZ finalises arrangement with Yangon Stock Exchange

KBZ Bank, which was chosen as the only fund settlement bank by the Yangon Stock Exchange (YSX), signed a contract with the YSX yesterday to officially enact the arrangement.

KBZ was selected among the country’s top six banks by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, said Daw Tin May Oo, a member of SECIM, in her opening remarks at the signing ceremony.

The bank beat out the competition to serve as the fund settlement bank of the Yangon Stock Exchange because of its strong willingness to fulfill the country’s needs, said U Nyo Myint, senior managing director of KBZ Bank Ltd.

The signing was held at the bank’s new branch in Strand Square, near the stock exchange building.

The contract jointly drawn up by the two institutions was signed by U Yin Zaw Myo, managing director of the Yangon Stock Exchange Joint-Venture Co Ltd, and U Than Cho, senior managing director of KBZ Bank Ltd.

Under the contract, all trading participants (securities companies) are required to deposit funds into the collateral account of the YSX.

International fuel jetty to be built in Mandalay

A BUSINESS delegation from the Czech Republic signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry yesterday to promote the further development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The business delegation representing the Czech Chamber of Commerce was led by Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Lubomir Zaoralek.

The MoU was signed by the vice presidents of UMFCCI and the Czech Chamber of Commerce at the head office of the UMFCCI in Yangon.—Myanmar News Agency

AN international standard fuel-handling jetty to serve upper Myanmar will be built by the Myanmar Energy Sector Development Public Co Ltd at the junction of the Ayeyawady River and the Dokehtawaddy River in Phonpet Village-tract in Amarapura Township, Mandalay Region.

“Mandalay Region is a strategic location that can link to the four corners of the country. The current jetty is in danger of fire, as it handles both cargo and fuel. The regional government has given the green light to the company,” said U Ye Myint, chief minister of Mandalay Region, at a stake-driving ceremony for the jetty, which will come with several oil tankers and office buildings.

“The site chosen for the jetty is convenient and includes fire safety provisions. The green light has been given to the public company instead of a private company for the systematic management of the jetty. As such, the people can buy quality fuel at fair prices,” the chief minister added.

The Myanmar government previously handed over state-owned fuel stations to private entrepreneurs. To ensure the systematic development of imports, storage, distribution, buying and sale of fuel, the Myanmar Energy Sector Development Public Co Ltd was founded following the merger of 52 fuel companies on January 1, 2013.

Dr Win Myint, the company’s chairperson, said: “Thanks to the formation of the public company, fuel prices have declined, and people can buy quality fuel. The government can earn more revenue. The Thilawa terminal in Yangon has been built at the main sea entrance for loading and unloading of fuels. The water route is the cheapest way to transport fuel.”

The project is being implemented on a 41.1-acre plot and covers 32 fuel tanks and four jetties. It will have the capacity to fill 136 fuel tankers and a 500,000-gallon water tank as a fire safety measure. The project will be completed within one year and will begin operations within the next six months.—Aung Thant Khaing

Bago watermelon export to China halted by falling prices

THE lower price offered by Chinese traders for watermelons grown in Bago Region has halted the trade of the fruit, it has been reported.

The price offered by Chinese watermelon buyers was previously as much as K2,500 per watermelon, but as of this month of February, this had fallen to just K1,500 per fruit, resulting in substantial losses for watermelon growers.

“The fall in the value of the Chinese RMB could also be a cause for Chinese trades to play with prices. Just as one can make a good profit from watermelons, one can also make an equally large loss. There are many people who are buying up whole plots of watermelons and exporting them to China,” said U Thar Hla, a watermelon trader from the Bago Region township of Daik Oo. The main cultivating Bago Region townships of watermelons are Daik Oo, Bago, Waw, Thanapin, Kawa and Paya, of which watermelon plots owners have, as of February, all ceased their trading of the fruit with China.

It is known that the number of watermelon stalls along the Yangon-Mawlamyine highway road, which sell the fruit grown by farmers in Waw township, have doubled to eighty stalls since last year.

“The majority of watermelon farmers are facing losses because of the fall in price of the fruit right at the time of its harvest. It was the same case last year. As one can’t make ends meet from selling to China anymore, people are setting up road side stalls to sell of their produce. They are striving to get back their investment.” said U Kyaw Hlaing, a watermelon farmer from a village in Waw township.

Watermelons are planted in November and can be sold from the following January, and are commonly grown as a fruit in the wake of the monsoon paddy harvest season, according to local growers. The acreage of watermelons will decline later this year as a direct result of losses made from the fall in the price of trade from China, while current expenses of one acre of watermelons - including costs of seed, fertiliser, ploughing and irrigation - require an investment of up to around K1 million, it is known from region watermelon farmers.—Myitmakha News Agency

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Record-breaking South Korea filibuster runs beyond 100 hours

SEOUL — South Korea opposition lawmakers seeking to block a government-backed "anti-terrorism" bill pushed their record-breaking filibuster into a sixth straight day of speeches in the parliamentary chamber yesterday.

The filibuster began on Tuesday and had continued around the clock for more than 115 hours by yesterday afternoon, making it the world’s longest, according to the Kyunghyang Shinmun newspaper.

The marathon filibuster easily surpassed a 58-hour session by 103 members of Canada’s New Democratic Party in 2011.

By yesterday afternoon, 23 lawmakers had spoken for an average of five hours each in opposition to a bill they believe will threaten personal freedoms if passed. Many carried boxes of documents to the podium at the National Assembly, some wearing sneakers.

Earlier this month, President Park Geun-hye’s office called for the bill to be delayed amid heightened tension with North Korea following its test launch of a long-range rocket this month and its fourth nuclear test last month.

The opposition wants the removal of a provision in the bill that would give South Korea’s intelligence agency authority to monitor private communications.

Lawmakers from the conservative ruling Saenuri party, which controls 157 of the assembly’s 293 seats, have expressed dismay that the speech-making is causing other bills to be delayed ahead of parliamentary elections due in April.

Opposition lawmaker Jung Chung-rae spoke for 11 hours and 39 minutes on Saturday, the longest speech of the filibuster thus far. Some lawmakers have come to tears during their speeches, while one of them sang and another read aloud from George Orwell’s ‘1984,’ according to a South Korean newspaper.

Choi Kyu-sung (C), a member of the main opposition Minjoo Party of Korea speaks at the National Assembly in Seoul, South Korea, on 28 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Bangladeshi shrimp farming gets app-savvy

DHAKA — Technology that uses Quick Reading Codes (QRC) — which work like universal bar codes — helps consumers of shrimps farmed in Bangladesh to trace the antecedents of what they are eating with a smartphone app.

Introduced to the farmers in southern Bangladesh by the research organisation WorldFish to enhance the safety of shrimp production and to make it marketing transparent, the QRC can trace all shrimp right from the larval stage supplied to farmers.

The QRC is everywhere (ESE), which can process and analyse data to offer traceability details throughout the production process — from hatchery to harvest and beyond.

The technology is used not only to give information about the shrimp but also addresses safety concerns and some other vital issues,” Main-Uddin Ahmed, owner of the MKA Hatchery in Cox’s Bazar, tells SciDev.Net. Bangladesh earns around US$ 9 million from shrimp exports annually, most of it to the US.

“The initiative is aimed at reducing the cost of traceability and the cost of monitoring the production methods of farmers,” says Keus. “This will lead to an increase in aquaculture productivity through improved household and commercial aquaculture.” — Reuters

Indonesia’s new climate model works best for South Asia

NEW DELHI — India has embarked on a programme of developing its own climate models since existing ones are inadequate to study the increase in extreme rainfall and correlate it with human-induced climate change, top scientists say.

Existing models do predict an increase in extreme rainfall events as observed in historical records, but these cannot be attributed to human-induced climate change, explains Arpita Mondal, assistant professor at the Indian Institute of Technology-Mumbai. “One of the major reasons behind this gap is because India does not have its own climate models,” she tells SciDev.Net.

M.N. Rajeevan, secretary in India’s ministry for earth sciences, tells SciDev.Net that by the end of 2016 India will have the computational power to make its own climate assessment model, allowing the country to participate in next assessment of the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

According to Mondal, an author of a paper on the gap published in the Journal of Hydrology in September 2015, what is problematic is that the trends of extreme rainfall events projected by model simulations over the last 100 years do not match trends in observed rainfall events.

In particular, the team looked at very heavy rainfall received in a single day against that in a five-day span, which is most likely to cause floods and found a need for fine-tuning climate models to simulate hydro-climatic variables at the South Asia regional level. “Human knowledge about the climate system is still inadequate and we need to take account of as many factors as possible,” Mondal says.

India’s Earth System Model (ESM), developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and slated for use with IPCC assessments this year, has already shown more than 90 per cent agreement with observed results, according to findings published in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society in August 2015. The IPCC mandates that every country tries to quantify how human activities are influencing observed changes in the climate.

“The ESM will help to create projections of the future monsoon climate and its uncertainties and will be useful for understanding observed changes in the climate caused by natural and man-made effects,” P. Swapan, a scientist at the IITM tells SciDev.Net.— Reuters
G-20 finance chiefs agree to use all policy tools for market stability

SHANGHAI — Finance leaders from the world’s 20 major economies on Saturday agreed to use “all policy tools — monetary, fiscal and structural — individually and collectively” to strengthen market stability and prop up sagging growth.

The meeting of the Group of 20 finance ministers and central bankers in Shanghai was held as investors were closely watching whether they could send a message strong enough to assuage anxiety in global markets stemming from stock sell-offs and a rise in currency volatility this year.

In their latest assessment of the world economy, the leaders who attended the two-day meeting said its “recovery continues, but it remains uneven and falls short of our ambition for strong, sustainable and balanced growth.”

“Downside risks and vulnerabilities have risen, against the backdrop of volatile capital flows, a large drop of commodity prices, escalated geopolitical tensions, the shock of a potential UK exit from the European Union, and a large and increasing number of refugees in some regions,” the document said.

China, which hosted the G-20 forum for the first time, was at the centre of attention as a slowdown in its growth, in part due to overcapacity, and opaque monetary policies have been a major trigger, if not the only reason, for the recent market turbulence.

The ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven industrialised countries, including Britain, Germany, Japan and the United States, but not China, had a separate informal meeting on Saturday.

They met in the Chinese economic hub early in the morning before the G-20 gathering started its second day of discussions, officials with direct knowledge of the situation said.

In line with their past commitments, the top G-20 policymakers agreed to “refrain from competitive devaluations” and said “we will not target our exchange rates for competitive purposes.”

Most notably China, the world’s second-largest economy which has been trying to achieve a well-managed rebalancing of its growth model, was under international pressure in recent weeks to explain its foreign exchange and other monetary policies more clearly.

On this point, the G-20 finance leaders said, “We will calibrate and clearly communicate our macroeconomic and structural actions to reduce policy uncertainty, minimize negative spillovers and promote transparency.”

They even incorporated a sentence that says, “We will consult closely on exchange markets,” after last-minute negotiations, according to officials involved in drafting the document.

In a video message to the opening of the meeting on Friday night, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said China has “the confidence to handle the complex situation at home and abroad.”

China’s economy slowdown has sharply pulled down oil and other commodity prices, with investors showing risk aversion in the preference of their assets and pulling money out of emerging countries.

The policymakers of the leading developed and developing economies discussed how best to tackle the capital outflows, which have accelerated after the US central bank ended seven years of near-zero interest rates in December, according to the G-20 officials.

During the G-20 meeting, China said it plans to unveil more specifics of its economic policy direction, in particular with regard to the ongoing structural reforms, next week when the country’s top legislature, the National People’s Congress, will hold an annual session, said the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Volcano warning issued for Mt. Io in southwestern Japan

MIYAZAKI, (Japan) — The Japan Meteorological Agency warned yesterday of a possible small eruption at Mt. Io, which straddles the southwestern prefectures of Miyazaki and Kagoshima, after observing an increase in volcanic earthquakes.

The local government in Ebino declared a 1-kilometre no-entry zone around the crater of Mt. Io, part of the Kirishima mountains, while the weather agency said that large stones could be ejected within a 1-km radius in the event of an eruption.

The agency detected 50 volcanic tremors by 3 pm Sunday at the 1,317-metre volcano, the highest per day since it set up seismometers there in March 2013.

Volcanic activity has intensified since last year, the agency said. In addition to volcanic quakes, fumarolic gas was observed in December and areas with high ground heat have been expanding.—Kyodo News

China will set plan for raising retirement age next year

BEIJING — China, whose state pension fund is under pressure due to overcapacity at Mt. Io, which straddles the southwestern prefectures of Miyazaki and Kagoshima, after observing an increase in volcanic earthquakes.

The semi-official news agency quoted Jin Weigang, head of research in the Ministry of Human Resource and Social Security, as saying a policy change would take about five years to phase in.

At present, China’s official retirement age for most men is 60. For women, it is 55 for civil servants and employees for state enterprises, and 50 for others.

The media report did not speculate on what changes might be made in retirement ages.

Analysts have long warned that China’s state pension facing a severe funding shortage. Some estimate the cash shortfall could rise to nearly $11 trillion in the next 20 years.

Jin was quoted as cautioning that a retirement policy change should allow flexibility and take into account the needs of various labour groups, and “should not consider only the revenues and expenditures of the pension fund.”

In coming years, the proportion of Chinese over age 60 will rise to 39 per cent of the population, from 15 per cent now, Yin Weimin, minister of human resources and social security said last year.—Reuters

Black-necked cranes are seen at Dashanbao Black-necked Crane Nature Reserve, southwest China’s Yunnan Province, on 26 February 2016. According to Dashanbao Black-necked Crane Nature Reserve, there were more than 1,100 black-necked cranes living through the winter here. Black-necked crane is evaluated as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Photo: Xinhua
Let children spread their wings

Kyaw Thura

Now that the exam season for the primary and secondary school students is over, many parents are contemplating where to send their children for summer camps and summer rental support in education is perfectly welcome, but care should be taken that their support does not amount to pressure.

Myanmar has lagged far behind many of its neighbours in terms of quality of education. At the root of the country’s failing educational record is the placement of undue emphasis on exam results in the pursuit of higher pass rates. Acting on instructions from above in order to appease officers of senior rank has corrupted teachers to the extent that they provide students with answers to tests and exams. This has led our education system down a destructive path.

Another thing that holds back the country’s educational mechanism is the widespread belief that a silent classroom is a good classroom. The contrary view, held in many countries with strong educational records, is that teachers have the responsibility to create an interactive and creative learning atmosphere in which children are allowed to challenge them. There are clear indications that children learn best through interaction with the teacher and their peers. In fact, education is a process in which students should be encouraged to develop critical thinking instead of memorising texts without understanding them.

It is, therefore, imperative that schools and training programmes provide environments that help to unlock students’ creative talents and critical thinking skills.

Write for us

We appreciate your feedback and contributions. If you have any comments or would like to submit editorials, analyses or reports please email khye@khye.com with your name and contact numbers.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

The Brief History of the Maha Myatmuni Buddhaimage from Kyauktaw Township

Saw Mra Aung

Out of innumerable Buddha images in Rakhine State, the Maha Myatmuni Buddhaimage, located in Kyauktaw Township is the most ancient and enjoys the greatest reputation. The mound where the palace housing this image is believed to have been the centre of Dhamma Vatī City and the cradle of Thera-vada Buddhism in Rakhine State. The history of this image is closely associated with the visit of the Buddha to Dhamma Vatī City of Rakhine region. Regarding it, Rakhine traditional chronicles run thus:

When the Buddha appeared in Majjhima desa. At the end of the Buddha’s departure, the king entreated him to leave an image on his behalf for public devotion. After receiving the Buddha’s assent, the king offered the Buddha some amount of pancaloha (alloy of gold, silver, copper, iron and lead) in baskets studded with jewels. Then the Buddha gave seven handfuls of his breast hair to Sakkā and Vissakāmā and assigned them the task of casting an image bearing the exact resemblance to him. Much delighted, Sakkā created a jewelled pavilion on the Sirikat mound at the south-eastern corner of the city and celebrated a celestial occasion. It was also a part of a state festival when Vaisakha Puja were observed in Rakhine.

Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish “Letter to the Editor” that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.
Expanded Meikhtila Lake bridge to open in March

A BRIDGE across Meikhtila Lake is being extended in order to facilitate transportation. The bridge is located along the Meikhtila-Kyaukpadaung motorway in Meikhtila Township, where the Kyaukpadaung, Yangon, Mandalay, Myingan and Taunggyi motorways meet, leaving the town congested.

The existing bridge across Meikhtila Lake was first built during the Japanese occupation of Burma during World War II to join the downtown wards with Nandawgon Ward. It was 200 feet long and 24.7 feet wide and had two lanes. It also included a 660-foot approach road at the west end of the bridge. There is a high school on the west of the bridge, accommodating 4,000 students. The old bridge has been deemed unsafe for the public, as there is a heavy traffic during rush hours.

The new bridge was approved by the regional parliament.

The new bridge is being built parallel to the old one. It will be 48 feet wide and include four lanes and two pedestrian paths, each of 6 feet wide. The bridge will be able to bear 60 tonnes.

The construction of the new bridge began on 1 July 2014 and was opened to vehicles on 11 July 2015.

The expansion of the new bridge began in November 2015 and is now 90-per cent complete. The construction of the approach road from the west of the bridge is complete. The roads are now being tarred, and handrails installed.

The expansion cost K£2.700 billion (US$2,182,700). The expansion of the new bridge will be finished March.

—Tin Hlaung (Meikhtila)

Letter to the editor

Dear Editor

The report, Tiger injures two people in Kawkayeik (GNLM, Feb 26) deserves special mention. The challenges of human-animal conflict are among one of the perpetual problems in all developing and under developed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America; and Myanmar is no exception to that. However, the seriousness of the report from the Malaysian New Agency goes beyond that. The injury of the human victims has been accurately reported but the saga of the rare and critically endangered species that lost its life seems to be purposely under reported. The news has made headlines or special mention in every newspaper across the globe except in Myanmar and the reason is that the tiger killed is a rare sub species (Indochinese tiger) and is slowly walking towards the door of extinction. The Indochinese tigers used to roam freely across southern China (Yunnan), Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. The species is believed to be extinct in the wild in China, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos or in other words no breeding pairs could be detected in their former wild habitats. Their last remaining habitats in the wild are left in Thailand (around 200) and Myanmar (around 85). However, whether this census numbers could be believed is highly doubtful and original numbers around the globe including species in the wild, under captive breeding programs and in zoos or biological parks include less than 400. The highly endangered species, like their Malay sub species from peninsular Malaysia are walking a tight rope and battling extinction in SE Asia. Severe anthropogenic pressure is pushing the species to be declared as critically endangered sub species of majestic wild cat by IUCN quite soon. Under these circumstances, the conservation and protection of this rare, top predator species need to be given the highest priorities possible. Hence the killing of this majestic species should be considered as a national loss of Myanmar and treated accordingly. The loss of tiger would mean the top of the food pyramid removed from the ecosystem and will have long term ecological consequences in Myanmar if not treated with highest urgency.

—ThaSa Ko Ko

Fuel stations to get surprise checks throughout summer

AS PART of its fire prevention programme, the Ministry of Energy and related departments will conduct surprise checks on fuel stations across Myanmar throughout the hot season.

Under the arrangement of the Ministry of Petroleum, the Ministry of Energy and local police will inspect and operate mobile petroleum shops across the region, inspecting petroleum distribution licensees without licenses have been forced to close by the end of this month. If not, they will be charged under Section 4 of the Essential Supplies and Services Law.

The authorities will conduct surprise checks on fuel stations and mobile petroleum shops across the region, inspecting petroleum distribution licensees without licenses have been forced to close by the end of this month. If not, they will be charged under Section 4 of the Essential Supplies and Services Law.

Mandalay hosts trade fair for rural products

A TRADE fair organised by the Department of Trade Promotion and Consumer Affairs under the Ministry of Commerce was held at the National Theatre in Mandalay last week to promote small businesses in rural areas.

At the exhibition, cotton products produced in Wantwin Township; handicrafts made of Sakyi rock (alabaster) from Naitogyi Township; coffee from Pyin Oo Lwin and Wyangon townships; tea from Namhsan in Shan State; traditional snacks from Mandalay Region; and earthenware, cosmetics, wooden handicrafts, traditional medicines, bamboo products and mats from Sagaing Region were displayed in 80 booths.

The fair was held from 25 to 27 February.

The event included a workshop on consumer protection, which began with an opening speech by Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Ye Myint.

The director general of the Department of Trade Promotion and Consumer Affairs gave a talk on consumer protection and cooperation with international organisations. The Association of Consumers suggested solutions to problems raised by consumers of Myanmar edible oil. The Edible Oil Entrepreneurs Association and the Edible Oil Mill Entrepreneurs Association gave talks on the development of import and distribution systems for edible oil. Attendees took turns commenting on how to ensure the quality and safety of edible oil.

Handicraft courses aim to empower rural community

THE Small-Scale Industries Department under the Ministry of Cooperatives has conducted handicraft trainings in rural areas in order to create opportunities for local residents by allowing them to sell handmade items.

In cooperation with the Rural Development Department, the Small-Scale Industries Department recently organised trainings in Hpa-An, Kayin State, a major tourist destination, in which residents learned to make items out of bamboo, rattan and water hyacinth.

Altogether, 30 trainees attended the 12-day craft courses, where they learned to make eight kinds of handicrafts, including tissue boxes, pen boxes, wallets and place mats. The trainees were awarded course completion certificates on 26 February.

—Ko Myo Lwin (Pha-An)
Clinton has one eye on Trump after huge win in South Carolina

COLUMBIA — Fresh off a runaway win in the South Carolina primary, Democrat Hillary Clinton turned her sights to a possible match-up with Republican front-runner Donald Trump in the 8 November presidential election.

Without mentioning Trump’s name, the former secretary of state made it clear on Saturday she was already thinking about taking on the real estate mogul whose recent string of victories made him the favourite to be the Republican nominee for the White House race.

Clinton shot down Trump’s campaign slogan of “Make America Great Again” and his plans to build a wall on the US-Mexican border.

“Despite what you hear, we don’t need to make America great again. America has never stopped being great,” she told supporters in her victory speech in South Carolina, pausing for applause then adding, “but we do need to make America whole again.”

“If you believe, as I do, that we need to be building bridges, we need to be tearing down barriers,” said Clinton, who would be America’s first woman president.

Clinton said she was not taking anything for granted after crushing Democratic rival Bernie Sanders on Saturday by 48 points and likely setting herself up for a good “Super Tuesday” on 1 March, a key date in the nomination battle.

But if Clinton and Trump win big on Tuesday as polls suggest, the chance of a general election match-up between them increases, adding another twist to a presidential campaign that has defied convention as US voters vent frustration over economic uncertainty, illegal immigration and national security threats.

A Trump-Clinton election would embody the outsider vs. establishment battle in American politics. Trump has never been elected to public office, while the former first lady has been a player in Washington for decades.

South Carolina Democratic voter Teri Faust, 59, said Clinton would be better able to take on Trump than Sanders, a US senator from Vermont.

“Bernie wouldn’t stand a chance against him. Hillary is strong,” said Faust, who met Clinton when she came to her church two years ago and again on Clinton’s first campaign trip to the state when she held a roundtable for minority women business owners.

South Carolina was Clinton’s third victory in the first four Democratic contests, raising more questions about whether democratic socialist Sanders will be able to expand his support beyond his base of predominantly white liberals.

Exit polls showed Clinton winning big in the state with almost every constituency. She won 9 of every 10 black voters, as well as women, men, urban, suburban, rural, very liberal and conservative voters. Sanders was ahead among voters between ages 18 and 29, and among white men.

When asked which candidate they thought “can win in November,” an overwhelming 79 per cent said Clinton, with only 21 per cent putting their faith in Sanders to defeat the eventual Republican nominee.

Sanders, who has energized the party’s liberal wing and brought young people to the polls by attacking income inequality and Wall Street excess, needs a breakthrough win in a key state in the next few weeks to keep his hopes alive.

“He’s got to pull off a surprise against Clinton soon or he won’t have time to recover,” said Phil Noble, a longtime Democratic activist in South Carolina.

He said Sanders’ momentum in South Carolina “fell off the table” after Clinton’s solid victory in Nevada on 20 February.

In the Republican race, Trump and rival Marco Rubio accelerated their political slugfest on Saturday during duelling appearances in Arkansas and Georgia.

“The majority of Republican voters do not want Donald Trump to be our nominee, and… they are going to support whoever is left standing that is fighting against him to ensure that we do not nominate a con artist,” Rubio told reporters in Georgia.

Trump, speaking in front of his private plane in Arkansas, belittled Rubio and accused the first-term US senator from Florida of being fresh.

“I watched this lightweight Rubio, total lightweight, little mouth on him, ‘bing, bing, bing’… and his new attack is he calls me a con artist,” Trump said.

“The last thing I am a con man.” — Reuters
Poland’s ruling conservatives say files cast new shadow over Walesa

WARSAW

Newly-published secret documents have revived claims Lech Walesa, the giant of Poland’s struggle to overthrow communism, was a secret police informer in the 1970s — allegations still fueling an old feud among postcommunist leaders.

Poland’s ruling conservative Civic Platform (PiS) has said the documents in its possession are authentic, and any discussion about them “against the Polish Nation” is inadmissible, adding that the first democratically elected president between 1990 and 1995, Walesa, has said the documents in question were fabricated, and denied he ever spied on fellow dissidents, an accusation he has faced repeatedly over two decades.

The new files contain a handwritten document signed “Lech Walesa” which includes a pledge to cooperate with the secret service. It mentions the codename “Bolek,” long ascribed by critics to Walesa.

Other documents include typed descriptions of conversations with Bolek in which he describes the mood among workers in the Gdansk shipyard where Walesa was working at the time and where the Solidarity movement originated. There are invoices, apparently signed by “Bolek” for cash received in return for information.

Scans of the files have been published in the Polish press. Some of the documents appear to have been written by secret police officials and some by Walesa.

Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), a state agency tasked with investigating crimes against the Polish Nation from World War Two until the collapse of communism, has said the documents in its possession are authentic, meaning they did originate from the secret service.

Forensic testing of the documents, including of handwriting purported to be Walesa’s, is under way.—Reuters

Iran’s pragmatic Rouhani cheers election wins, says gov’t stronger

TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani won an emphatic vote of confidence and reformists allied with him secured surprise gains in parliament in early results from elections that could accelerate the Islamic Republic’s emergence from years of isolation.

While gains by moderates and reformists in Friday’s polls were more evident in the capital, Tehran, the sheer scale of the advances there suggests a legislature more friendly to the pragmatist Rouhani has emerged as a distinct possibility.

A loosening of control by the anti-Western hardliners who currently dominate the 290-seat parliament could strengthen his hand to open Iran further to foreign trade and investment following last year’s breakthrough nuclear deal.

A reformist-backed list of candidates aligned with Rouhani was on course to win all 30 parliamentary seats in Tehran, initial results released yesterday showed. Top conservative candidate Gholamreza Haddad Adel was set to lose his seat.

“The people showed their power once again and gave more credibility and strength to their elected government,” Rouhani said, adding he would work with anyone who won election to build a future for Iran that was not centralised, oil-expecting country.

The polls were seen as a turning point for Iran, which has only 60 per cent of its 80 million population under 30 years, and its elected government sworn in this month, said Rouhani’s spokesperson. “The people are over the past decade and restoring credibility and strength to their government,” he added.

The next parliament will be like no other parliament in the history of Iran as no political faction will have the absolute say,” the newspaper said on its front-page.

Millions crowded polling stations on Friday to vote for parliament and the Assembly of Experts, which selects the country’s highest authority, the supreme leader. Both houses have been in the hands of hardliners for years.

Supporters of Rouhani, who promoted the nuclear deal, were pitted against hardliners close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who are wary of détente with Western countries.

Rouhani and key ally and former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani were leading the race for the Assembly of Experts with most votes counted, and appeared to be sure of winning seats, early results released on Saturday showed.

Until now, the contest for this seat of clerical power was an unremarkable event, but not this time. Because of Khamenei’s health and age, 76, the new assembly members who serve eight-year terms are likely to choose his successor. The next leader could well be among those elected this week.

Rafsanjani is among the founders of the Islamic Republic and was its president from 1989-1997. Nearly always at the centre of Iran’s intricate webs of power, the arch-fixer is famous for his pragmatism and political acumen.

Four prominent hardliners were on course to be elected with lesser scores in the experts assembly race: Ahmad Jamati was in 11th place and the assembly’s current chairman, Mohammad Yazdi, was 15th. Arch-conservative Mohammad-Taghi Mesbah-Yazdi appeared unlikely to win a seat, according to partial results.

The results were initially announced as final in an official statement. A later statement said the results were partial and a final tally would be announced in due course.

A Reuters tally, based on official results published so far, suggested the pro-Rouhani camp and allied independents were leading in the parliamentary vote. Some moderate conservatives, including current speaker Ali Larijani, support Rouhani. A breakdown of the results had independents on 44, reformists on 79, and hardliners on 106, the tally showed. A number of seats will be decided in run-offs in late April because no candidate won the required 25 per cent of votes cast. Eight of the initial winners were women.

Analyst say the large number of independents may be significant as they could cooperate across ideological lines with Rouhani’s government. Whatever the outcome, Iran’s political system places much power in the hands of the conservative Islamic establishment according to partial results published so far.

Inside the Islamic Republic’s emergence from years of isolation

An Iranian woman fills in her ballot during elections for the parliament and a leadership body called the Assembly of Experts, which has the power to appoint and dismiss the supreme leader, in Tehran on 28 February 2016. —Reuters

Afghan police suspected of aiding Taliban killed, detained by army

LASHKAR GAH. (Afghanistan) — A policeman was killed and another 30 were detained during a joint operation between Afghan troops and police suspected of supporting Taliban insurgents in embattled Helmand province, Afghan officials said yesterday.

Reports of fighting between police and soldiers add to the up-heaval in the southern province, long a stronghold of the insurgent, where the military has advanced several outposts. The NATO-led coalition and the Afghan government are trying to overhaul security forces and reverse insurgent gains there.

The incident on Friday was in Sangin district, the scene of some of the heaviest fighting in Afghanistan’s long war, Helmand police chief Abdul Rahman Sarjarg told Reuters.

“Army forces detained the police and took them to the military corps in Helmand,” Sarjarg said. “An investigation is ongoing at the moment.”

The acting Sangin district police chief was among the detainees, Sarjarg said. Sarjarg refused to confirm the reason for the operation but a senior Afghan army official in Helmand told Reuters the army and US advisers suspected the police of providing weapons and ammunition to the Taliban and that they had planned to eventually surrender to the insurgents.

“During our investigation we found some evidence they were helping the Taliban and we were afraid they may submit the district to the Taliban,” said the officer, who asked not to be identified because he was not authorised to discuss the operation. “We launched a joint operation with Americans and detained all of them.”

The full extent of American involvement was not clear and a spokesman for the US military in Kabul did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The coalition recently deployed several hundred more troops to Helmand in a bid to increase security for the advisers helping Afghan forces. US air strikes have also played an important role in trying to blunt Taliban offensives.

Almost 100 Afghan army officers were removed or reassigned in Helmand in recent months, and the army abandoned its outposts in several of the most hotly contested districts to redeploy elsewhere.—Reuters
Former Auschwitz SS medic to stand trial in Germany

BERLIN — A 95-year-old former Nazi SS paramedic at the Auschwitz death camp, accused of being an accomplice to the murder of thousands, is to stand trial in Germany on Monday, one in a series of such recent cases.

Hubert Zafke was serving as a medic in the SS at the biggest death camp in occupied Poland where he was deployed in 1943. During the trial, he will be faced with death accounts of at least two witnesses.

Prosecutors in the northern German city of Schwerin say that Zafke, in his function as a medic, supported the slaughter at Auschwitz, where over 1.2 million people, most of them Jews, were killed.

Zafke was responsible for treating SS members in case of sickness, not any death of the inmates, but prosecutors say he was stationed directly on the path leading to the gas chambers. The prosecutors say that, among being a witness to these gas chambers, Zafke also must have been aware of the constant smoke arising from the crematoriums.

A precedent for such cases was set in 2011, when former Nazi guard John Demjanjuk was sentenced for being an accessory to the mass murder during the Holocaust.—Reuters

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
MV NINOS VOY NO (1047W)
Consignees of cargo carried on MV NINOS VOY NO (1047W) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29.2.2016 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of H.P.T where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11.24 pm on 2-24 pm to Clams Day. Thanes second day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

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ILO’s new contact telephone and fax numbers
Due to the changes of Myanmar Post and Telecommunications (MPT) services for its auto telephone customers, Yankin RSU Exchange needs to upgrade its telephone functions. MPT’s new telephone system will be replaced with modern MSAN Exchange urgently. Hence, the following are the new telephone numbers of the ILO Liaison Office for the general public’s record and information.

LIaison Officer International Labour Organization (ILO)
Office address: No 1, A/1, Kanlai, (Thitsar) Road Yankin township, Yangon, MYANMAR
Telephone: 01 233 658, 01 233 6539
Fax: 01 233 6582
P.O Box: 679
E-mail: yangon@ilo.org

ILO takes this opportunity to inform the general public of its other numbers in different locations.

Forced Labour complaint
Contact number in Bago Region: 09 73 22 02 06
Contact number in Magway Region: 09 44 80 96 06
Contact number in Mon State: 09 42 75 56 22
Contact number in Chin State: 09 45 56 96 346
Contact number in Hpakant Region: 09 45 56 91 46
Contact number 24/7: 09 45 56 92 44

Peace Project (Shan State)
Office address: No. 14, Nawarat Road, Thitll Ward, Taunggyi Township, Shan State (South)
Contact number in Shan (South): 09 25 07 86 411

Indian man allegedly kills 14 family members before committing suicide

NEW DELHI — A man in Indian state of Maharasthra killed 14 members of his family before committing suicide at his house yesterday, police said.

The gruesome incident took place at Thane’s Thane during early hours yesterday. “We have recovered the bodies from the house and their throats have been slit with a sharp edged knife,” a police official told media outside the house. “The man who is believed to be behind the murders was found hanging in one room holding a knife.”

Reports said the deceased included eight children, the man’s wife, his three sisters, and his parents besides the man himself.

A woman of the family who survived the attack has been hospitalised. Ashutosh Dumbare, joint commissioner of Thane Police said they have started investigations into the case.

“The reason behind the killings is still unknown as there is only one survivor and we haven’t recorded her statement as of now because she is in a state of shock,” Dumbare told media.

Reports quoting preliminary investigations said the man had sedated the family members before killing them one after another.—Xinhua

One step closer to stopping the import of goods made with forced labour

THE International Labour Organisation estimates that nearly 21 million people around the world are subject to forced labour. That astounding number begs the question: Who is buying the tainted fruits of that inhumane labour?

It should come as no surprise that many of the goods made with modern slavery end up being consumed and here in the United States. Whether it is shrimp from Thailand, shirts made with cotton from Uzbekistan, or electronic devices made from cobalt ore mined in the Congo, most of us wear, eat, tweet from, or even drive products touched by modern slavery.

It should never have been this way. In 1930, Congress passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which included a provision barring the importation of goods made with forced or prison labour (later expanded to forced child labour as well). While this provision was primarily sought to prevent unfair competition in US markets, it potentially had an important human rights component as well.

Unfortunately, the law included an exception, which swallowed the rule: if there were a “consumptive demand” for the good, then it could be imported even if it was made with slave labour. For example, there is a high demand for cocoa for chocolate, for example, and the exception has allowed its import regardless of how the cocoa was produced because we cannot grow cocoa beans in the United States. Today, our appetite for foreign-made goods is so ubiquitous that the consumptive demand exception has become an insurmountable obstacle to enforcing this important prohibition.

Many years of advocacy recently paid off, however, when President Obama signed the Trade Facilitation and Enforcement Act, eliminating the odious exception. This is inspiring news for all who believe US markets should not be open to goods made with modern slavery, and for those who want to press governments and companies to do more to end forced labour abroad. Finally, after 85 years of ineffectual enforcement, the US Government has the leverage to implement this law in a way that will actually foster real change.

This is only the beginning of a long road, however, because decades of inaction on this provision have resulted in an atrophied and virtually useless system of enforcement. For example, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is charged with seizing goods made with forced labour, but they have no capacity to investigate or document whether that is the case. CBP has to rely on public petitions or a different part of DHS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (or ICE), to conduct investigations through their agents abroad. Unfortunately, this type of law enforcement coordination is notoriously tricky.

Moreover, CBP has both a trade facilitation function and a trade enforcement function. With a mission to both bring in goods and to keep them out, it is no wonder that existing investigations get bogged down. In addition, the current way the provision is enforced requires that a particular pallet of goods be identified as being produced in a particular factory where forced labour was used. While logical, it is also limiting. We need to look at parallel enforcement actions and determine whether, for example, there can be an effective consumption or importation of certain categories of goods we know are produced with forced labour.

The Administration will also need to develop a strategy for targeting goods, countries and companies using the limited investigative capacity available. ICE and CBP could focus on products from countries where it is known that forced labour is prevalent, and on products from companies that have done little or nothing to prevent forced labour in their supply chains. Information already available from the California Supply Chains Transparency Act and the Department of labour’s List of Goods made with Forced and Child labour can be used to tailor US efforts. On a positive note, the recently-passed bill has a requirement that the United States Government report on its investigations under this provision, giving us insight into how it is being implemented.

And, of course, this will all require additional resources to ensure that these efforts are successful.

The repeal of the consumptive demand loophole was an important first step, and we should recognise it as the major achievement that it is. Now, we must redouble our efforts to ensure that the promise of this newly-strengthened law is fulfilled, and that imported goods we use in our everyday lives are free from modern slavery.—Reuters
Four stabbed in melee at Ku Klux Klan rally in California

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Four people were stabbed, and one of them critically wounded on Saturday in a scuffle between members of the Ku Klux Klan and counter-protesters near a planned KKK rally in Anaheim, California, police said.

Thirteen people were arrested following the melee, including one Klan member who is accused of stabbing a counter-protestor with a flagpole, said Anaheim Police Sergeant Darrel Wyatt.

Several counter-protesters were taken into custody after stomping a KKK member on the ground, Wyatt said.

Wyatt said the altercation took place as soon as several Klan members arrived at the park about a mile north of Disneyland, for a planned rally there.

“As soon as they got out of their vehicle, immediately they were attacked by counter-protesters and this caused a melee down the block,” he said.

Wyatt said four people were wounded in the ensuing confrontation. The person most seriously stabbed was grabbed by a flagpole that had an American eagle finial at the top and taken to a local hospital in critical condition. Several witnesses said that a peaceful counter-protest had been under way for about three hours when the Klan members arrived in a black SUV.

The vehicle pulled up and three men got out and began to unload signs when the group of about 30 counter-protestors approached them, yelling and throwing sticks, witnesses said.

“Three people were stabbed by the fire hydrant,” said Darren Simpson, 49. “These Klan guys were fighting for their lives.”

The Klan members attempted to get back into the car, but it sped off, leaving them behind, said Don Garcia, 37.

He said the angry mob chased the Klanmen down the block, yelling: “Get out of here! You’re not welcome!” “It was crazy,” Garcia said. “A lot of us were trying to break it up. This was not necessary, they should’ve just let the Klan protest. This is America, we have free speech.”

The Klan, founded after the abolition of slavery in the US South in the mid-19th century, has evolved in recent years into a collection of loosely affiliated or independent groups that share a political philosophy based on racial separation.

Most recently it made national headlines when a former KKK leader, David Duke, said he backed Donald Trump for the Republican presidential nomination.

Trump rejected Duke’s support and on Friday a man wearing a shirt reading “KKK endorses Trump,” was ejected from a Trump campaign rally in Oklahoma.

Death toll from China building collapse hits 6

NANCHANG — The death toll from an apartment building collapse in east China’s Jiangxi Province has risen to six as rescuers ended a 34-hour rescue operation yesterday morning.

Eight survivors, including one injured, were pulled out alive from debris after the six-story building collapsed in Anyuan District,萍乡 City on Friday afternoon. A preliminary investigation showed the accident was caused by an improper renovation conducted at an apartment on the fourth floor, leading to the collapse of the upper stories.

The city government said it would help treat the injured, take care of relatives of the dead and relocate residents. The provincial government issued a circular Saturday ordering a safety overhaul of all old residential buildings. —Xinhua

Bangladesh PM inaugurates development activities of 10 economic zones

DHAKA — Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated yesterday the development activities of 10 more economic zones in the country.

Through a video conference from Dhaka’s Bangabandhu International Conference Centre, Hasina inaugurated the development activities at the economic zones.

They are Mirersarai Economic Zone, Sabrang Tourism Park, Srichata Economic Zone, Mongla Economic Zone, AK Khan Economic Zone, Abdul Monem Economic Zone, Meghna Economic Zone, Meghna Industrial Economic Zone, Bay Econoimic Zone and Anura Economic Zone.

Bangladeshi Finance Minister AMA Muhith had earlier said as many as 100 economic zones will be established across the country in the next 15 years. That will increase export earnings by 40 billion US dollars and generate about 10 million additional employments,” he said. Bangladesh has now 37 government owned and 10 private economic zones. Bangladesh’s Export Processing Zones, the most preferred destinations for both domestic and foreign investment, are mainly dominated by labour-intensive textiles, ready-made garments and footwear plants. Bangladesh Export Processing Zones Authority, which has been placed directly under the country’s Prime Minister’s Office, was set up by an act of parliament in 1980 to woo particularly foreign capital and technical know-how and thereby boost exports through the establishment of export-oriented industries in special zones with specific facilities. —Xinhua

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Corner of Mahabandola Road and Then Phyu Road,
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‘Spotlight’ leads Spirit Award winners; diversity takes centre stage

SANTA MONICA, Calif — The journalism drama “Spotlight” led the winners at Saturday’s Independent Spirit Awards with four accolades, including the night’s top prize for best feature, at an event where diversity was front and centre as black and transgenders acted won key awards.

“Spotlight,” about the Boston Globe’s probe into Catholic church child abuse and which is the Oscar best picture front-runner, also won Spirit Awards for best director, best screenplay and best editing.

The Spirit Awards honour independent films made within a $20 million budget and often recognise films that go on to win Oscars the next day, such as dark comedy “Birdman” last year.

“It’s rare to make a film that impacts the world as significant as this one has,” “Spotlight” producer Michael Sugar said on stage. “By honouring it, you’re making more people aware of it, and as more people are aware of it, more can be spared from a life of abuse.”

The Netflix film “Beasts of No Nation,” about child soldiers in West Africa and starring a cast of black actors, took two awards, with teen newcomer Abraham Attah winning best actor and Britain’s Idris Elba winning best supporting actor.

Attah, who beat out contenders including Jason Segel and Ben Mendelsohn, thanked everyone involved in the production of the film, from Elba and director Cary Fukunaga to the costume designers. “Tangerine” star Mya Taylor was named best supporting actress, becoming the first transgender artist to win a Spirit Award.

“There’s a transgender talent, there’s very beautiful transgender talent,” Taylor told the audience. “You better get out there and put them in your next movie.”

The annual Spirit Awards, held over lunch in a tent on Southern California’s Santa Monica beach the day before Hollywood’s glamorous Oscars ceremony, offers a laidback setting for nominees and guests to let their hair down.

“Room” star Brie Larson won the best actress Spirit award, and is the front-runner to win the best actress Oscar.

The spotlight on diversity at the Spirit Awards comes amid a furor in Hollywood over the 20 all-white acting nominees for this year’s Oscars, fueling the #OscarsSoWhite debate.

Spirit Award host Kumail Nanjiani, who is Paki-stani-American, introduced himself and his co-host, openly gay comedian Kate McKinnon, as “a gay woman and a Pakistani man. Or as Hollywood thinks of us, a straight woman and her IT guy.”

Lesbian romance period drama “Carol” led the nominees on Saturday with six nods, but came away with only the best cinematography award.—Reuters

50 shades of dreck? Steamy ‘Grey’ film tops Razzies as Hollywood’s worst

Actors Dakota Johnson and Jamie Dornan (L) arrive for the screening of the movie ‘Fifty Shades of Grey’ at the 65th Berlinale International Film Festival in Berlin on 11 February 2015. PHOTO: REUTERS

SANTA MONICA, Calif — The erotic box office hit “Fifty Shades of Grey” led the pack on Saturday for the annual Razzie Awards, “honoring” Hollywood’s worst films, while “Rocky” star Sylvester Stallone punched his way to a special Redeemer award for his Oscar-nominated turn in “Creed.”

“Fifty Shades of Grey,” based on the best-selling E.L. James novels, dominated the tongue-in-cheek awards announced annually on the eve of the Oscars ceremony. Stars Jamie Dornan and Dakota Johnson took their whacks for worst actor and actress, as well as worst screen combo.

The smash hit from Universal Pictures, which earned $571 million worldwide, also won worst screenplay and tied with sci-fi adventure “Fantastic Four” as worst film.

Stallone, 69, who is seen as an Oscar front-runner on Sunday for reprising his iconic role as Rocky Balboa in “Creed,” won the Razzie Redeemer Award, going from an “all-time Razzie champ to 2015 award contender.”

Stallone was not alone in being lauded by both the Razzies and the Oscars in the course of a single weekend. He was joined by Eddie Redmayne, who was named worst supporting actor for the sci-fi film “Jupiter Ascending,” Redmayne who won the best actor Oscar last year, is Oscar-nominated again on Sunday for “The Danish Girl.”

“Fantastic Four” was also dubbed the year’s worst remake, rip-off or sequel, while Josh Trank copped the worst director gong. “Big Bang Theory” star Kaley Cuoco took worst supporting actress for her roles in both “Alvin and the Chipmunks: Road Chip” and “The Wedding Ringer.”

The 36th Razzie nominees and winners are selected by 943 voting Razzie members in 48 states and more than 20 foreign countries. Anyone can sign up to vote, with memberships starting at $40.

Winners, if they choose to accept, are given a handcrafted, golf-ball-sized raspberry ships starting at $40.

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Some US media reports on Friday suggested Ono, 83, had suffered a possible stroke or heart attack, but Mintz had denied that. “Thanks again for everyone’s concern,” her son, singer-songwriter Sean Ono Lennon, said in a post on Twitter. “She’s home and running about as usual. Just the flu in the end. I may go get a flu shot now...”

Ono’s artistic career has spanned more than five decades. Last year, the Museum of Modern Art in New York marked her achievements with an exhibition of her early works, showing how her ideas influenced the development of art in the city in the 1960s.

She and John Lennon were married in 1969, and their son, Sean, was born in 1975.

Lennon was shot to death on 8 December, 1980, in front of the iconic Dakota apartment building in New York where he lived with Ono.—Reuters

Yoko Ono released from New York hospital, recovering from flu

LOS ANGELES — Yoko Ono, the artist and widow of the late Beatle John Lennon, has been released from a New York City hospital after seeking treatment for the flu, her spokesman said on Saturday.

“She is home recovering from the flu,” spokesman Elliot Mintz said in an email.

Ono checked into the hospital on Friday after complaining of severe flu-like symptoms, Mintz said at the time.

Some US media reports on Friday suggested Ono, 83, had suffered a possible stroke or heart attack, but Mintz had denied that. “Thanks again for everyone’s concern,” her son, singer-songwriter Sean Ono Lennon, said in a post on Twitter on Saturday afternoon. “She’s home and running about as usual. Just the flu in the end. I may go get a flu shot now...”

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Lennon was shot to death on 8 December, 1980, in front of the iconic Dakota apartment building in New York where he lived with Ono.—Reuters

Mexico becomes fertile ground for Hollywood directors

MEXICO CITY — By Sunday night, if bookmakers and film buffs are correct, Mexico’s Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu will have taken home his second straight Oscar for Best Director.

“The Revenant,” starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Tom Hardy, has established itself as a clear favorite throughout the awards season, with Inarritu winning the British Academy Film Award, the Directors Guild of America Award, and the Golden Globe for Best Director.

This is Inarritu’s third Oscar nomination. He was first nominated for “Babel” in 2006 and won an Oscar for “Birdman” in 2015.—Xinhua
Dognapping on the rise in petloving Brazil

SAO PAULO — While Brazil’s economy is in the doghouse, one underground business is bucking the trend — dognapping.

Bosco, a black and white Boston Terrier stolen in November from outside a grocery store in Sao Paulo’s posh Jardins neighbourhood, became the poster-pup for the rise of dognappings.

His owner, screenwriter Fernando Pedrosa, unleashed a storm of comment on social media sites Facebook, Twitter and Instagram under the tag #cadeobosco, which translates as “where is Bosco.”

Raul Rocha, one of a team of six investigators at DetetivePet in Sao Paulo that helped broker Bosco’s return, said that in the past, thieves were mostly in it for quick cash, selling the pitiful pooch at informal sidewalk fairs or to black market puppy mills.

“These days, more of our cases involve ransom,” Rocha said in his office, adding he has seen a sharp increase in stolen dogs in the past year. “Criminals are using the owner’s attachment to the dog to ensure payment.”

Pedrosa declined to comment on his ordeal, saying he and Bosco wanted time to recover. But his postings have encouraged other owners to post stolen pets. Police say there are no official figures on animal theft but detectives and local media say thieves are increasingly preying on the booming pet business.

Brazilians have more than 52 million dogs, according to the IBGE federal statistics institute — exceeding the number of children under 14 years old in Latin America’s largest economy.

About one in every four families owns at least one dog in Brazil, compared with roughly one in every three families in the United States, according to trade group Pet Brasil.

Owners are being warned by industry groups and veterinarians not to leave their dogs leashed outside of shops and to walk them in groups.

Thieves target small breeds such as Pomeranians, Pugs and Pekingese, which tend to be easier to carry off without a struggle. They also offer attractive returns on the black market.

Most thefts occur on the street and are not violent, Rocha said.

At GAMA PET, a high-end pet shop in the Shopping Cidade Jardim mall in Sao Paulo, a six-week-old French Bulldog sells for more than 7,000 reais ($1,750), the equivalent of 10 months’ salary on Brazil’s minimum wage. Thieves would get only a fraction of this amount selling an undocumented dog on the street, pet detective Rocha said.

A local startup with private equity backing called Marq Systems will launch in April a global positioning system (GPS) and cellular-equipped device that attaches to animals’ collars and signals the owners’ smartphone its whereabouts every few minutes.

“We realised the owners needed a reliable way to locate their pets for their own comfort,” said Daniel Rosenfeld, one of the founding partners.

—Reuters

Artist Cui Ruzhuo gets Forbidden City show

BEIJING — Works by Chinese artist Cui Ruzhuo have gone on display at the Palace Museum, also known as the Forbidden City.

Among the 209 items are traditional ink wash paintings, finger paintings as well as calligraphy. The exhibition, the Palace Museum’s first in 2016, will be on display in the newly-opened Meridian Gate exhibition hall till 25 May. Visitors can access the exhibition free of charge.

Cui, known for his images of flowers, birds and landscapes, has come to international attention for the record values of his works at auction. In 2015, his “Landscape in Snow” was purchased for over 30 million US dollars at Poly Auction Hong Kong.—Xinhua

Blackpool’s iconic tower wins heritage accolade

LONDON — Blackpool Tower, one of the most iconic structures in Britain, has won a heritage award, the Institution of Civil Engineers announced Saturday.

Visible on a clear day from Wales and the English Lake District, the 158 meter high tower opened in 1894, inspired by the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

Although it is the highest, Grade One Listing from Historic England, the accolade from ICE is its first official recognition for its importance as a work of engineering.

In its citation for its newly introduced heritage awards, ICE said Blackpool Tower was “possibly the most instantly recognisable work of civil engineering in Britain”.

Darrell Matthews, director of ICE in Britain’s North West region described the tower’s nomination as really interesting because civil engineering was usually associated with more practical structures such railways and bridges. But the tower, on the northern England coast of the Irish Sea was, he said “all about having fun.”

“There’s no doubting the engineering skill that went into designing and building it, so it’s a very worthy winner. The Blackpool Tower is possibly the most instantly recognisable work of civil engineering in the UK,” said Matthews.

Chris Hudson from ICE’s Lancashire branch described Blackpool Tower as a monument to civil engineering genius. Every year hundreds of thousands of people ascend the top of the tower — in elevators — many during to walk on a glass skyswalk, staring down onto the ground below. The glass, 5 centimetres thick, can withstand the weight of two elephants.

The tower rises above a Victorian complex that was one of the world’s most stunning dance floors, the ornate Tower Ballroom. The building also accommodates a circus and a range of other family attractions, including a 4D cinema.

The tower is illuminated at night with 10,000 bulbs during the resorts annual light festival, Blackpool Illuminations, when the entire 10 kilometres of seafront is spectacularly lit up.—Xinhua

Artist Cui Ruzhuo sits in a bath with petals during a spa treatment for dogs at Gama Pet pet store at the Cidade Jardim mall in Sao Paulo, Brazil on February 24, 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Artist Cui Ruzhuo gets Forbidden City show
Atletico derby win virtually buries Real Madrid

MADRID — Atletico Madrid extended their dominance over neighbours Real with a 1-0 derby win on Saturday that leaves the Bernabeu virtual out of the title race.

French striker Antoine Griezmann scored the only goal in the 53rd minute to put Atletico within five points of leaders Barcelona in second place in the standings.

Third-placed Real, who were unbeaten in 11 matches and on a run of seven home wins going into the match, remain nine points behind bitter rivals Barcelona and will be 12 adrift if the champions win at home to Sevilla on Sunday.

Diego Simeone’s Atletico have lost only once in 10 meetings with Real in all competitions while Zinedine Zidane tasted defeat as Real’s coach for the first time in nine matches in charge.

“The league is over,”资管
dane conceded. “To lose at home to Atletico is a hard blow.”

“We take it as natural to be able to win here at the Bernabeu,” Simeone told reporters.

Griezmann exchanged a one-two with left back Filipe Luis as he headed into the box and steered a sweet, low shot inside the near post past goalkeeper Keylor Navas for his 13th league goal. It was Atletico’s first goal in three matches after two 0-0 draws and their renowned steely defence held firm to allow Real only the odd sighting of their net and just three clear chances for Cristiano Ronaldo.

“This match defines us as a team and we will continue to try and improve,” Simeone said. Just past the half hour, Ronaldo had a free kick punched away by Jan Oblak, then Karim Benzema was narrowly wide with a shot across the face of goal after the ball had come back into the box. Griezmann had his first chance in the 41st with a shot from outside the box that was to dip under the bar before Navas leapt to tip it over.

A minute later, the Costa Rica goalkeeper went down at the foot of his near post to turn a shot from midfielder Koke away for a corner.

Navas also saved well from right back Juanfran in the second half while the Real onslaught in the final quarter produced only two headers on target for Ronaldo, neither of much trouble to Oblak.

Danilo Langaing at left back in place of fellow Bra
zilian Marcelo who missed the match with muscle fatigue, started a break deep in the Real half and was just wide of the far post with the finish in the home side’s last hope of an equaliser.—Reuters

Leicester’s dream stays alive with late Ulloa winner

LONDON — Leaders Leicester City belatedly grasped their golden opportunity to pile the pressure on their Premier League pursuers on Saturday as a late strike from Leonardo Ulloa sank struggling Norwich City 1-0 at the King Power Stadium.

With closest challengers Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal not in action on Sunday, Leicester had the stage to themselves to forge five points clear at the summit and made the most of their chance with a victory they scarcely deserved.

Even though the team produced one of the least convincing displays of their surre
al season, Ulloa’s 89th-minute contribution, sliding in to knock home Marc Albrighton’s cross, proved decisive for them.

It stretched Leicester’s ad
vantage significantly over the north London duo although both second-placed Spurs, at home to Swansea City, and Arsenal, who visit Manchester United, can reduce the deficit to two points again on Sunday.

More importantly, it demonstrated to manager Claudio Ranieri that, following the heartbreak of the stoppage-time loss to Arsenal — a defeat his men had two weeks to stew over as they are not going to be easily deflected from their title am
bitions.

“We believed until the end,” the Italian told the BBC.

“This victory was very important to restart after the Arsenal defeat.

“I said before the Arsenal match that Norwich would be more difficult. The conclusion I have drawn from this is that my players believe until the end. For us, the next match is always the final match. That is our mental

ity.” Chelsea also provided a rare reminder of their champi
ons’ mettle, fighting back from a goal down to take an excellent 2-1 win at Southampton, with an 89th-minute booming header from Branislav Ivanovic earning the spoils.

With Chelsea’s Guus Hiddink and his former PSV Eindhoven player Ronald Koeman now doing battle as managers, it appeared the pupil might have come out on top when Southampton took the lead through a Shane Long header just before the break. Yet the visitors equalised through Cesc Fabregas in the second half, a goal which Koeman felt was lucky as his side had been deprived of what should have been a free kick moments before.

Afterwards, Hiddink, de
lighted that Chelsea had moved into a place under his sooth
ing stewardship, reported that he was in no hurry to bring captain John Terry back into action after his recent hamstring injury. “I hope that John is close to return
ing but we have a lot of games remaining. I don’t want to take a big risk on his fitness,” Hiddink told the BBC.—Reuters