THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Arakan Army officer arrested with guns, drugs in Yangon

Arms and ammunition seized from Arakan Army. PHOTO: MYANMAR POLICE FORCE

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 groundsheets, 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 the two men rented six months ago in Hlaingthaya Township.

Further investigations led to the exposure of six RPG launchers and shells, 70 cartridges, 45 TNT blocks, 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*

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Three Myanmar women, one Chinese man charged for human trafficking attempt

FOUR people were charged for human trafficking by the Muse Police Station on 27 February.

Ma Nan Khum, Ma Nan Ban, Ma Aung Aye and a Chinese man were reported to police by a local resident for suspicious behaviour.

A subsequent investigation revealed that the three women persuaded a teenage girl into marrying the Chinese man for the money she would need to support her family. The young girl, aged 16, was struggling to support her siblings because her mother is in prison. The traffickers told her she would get 30,000 yuan if she agreed to marry the Chinese man.

Action has been taken against the four human traffickers, and plans are underway to charge the Chinese man for illegal entry into the country. *—Min Naing*

Ma Nan Khum.

Ma Aung Aye.

Wan Chaik Mein.

Ma Nan Ban.

Nyaung Chaungtha beach opens to public

Ko Moe

NYAUNG CHAUNGTHA beach, located in Nyaungdon Township, Ayeyawady Region, was officially opened yesterday. The beach is fitted with safety measures for visitors.

"The majority of the income from the beach will be used to build a city hall and roads in Nyaungdon," said U Khin Maung Nyo, secretary of the Supporting Committee for the Development of Nyaungdon Township, at the opening ceremony.

The beach is located at the junction of the Yangon River and the Panhlaing 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.

Nyaungchaungtha Beach. PHOTO: FILE/GNLM

Buddhists invited to pay homage to sacred relics

All Buddhist devotees interested to pay homage to the sacred relics of Lord Buddha and arahats are invited to come to Arindama Monastery in Maha Swe 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 Sariputtara, Rev Ananda, Rev Bakula, Rev Anuruddha, Rev Nagasim, Rev Moggalana 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 - 73241707; 09 - 261822650; 09 - 5414091; 09 - 795577179 or with U Tin Win (Sports and Physical Education Department) through telephone numbers: 09 - 31486980; 09 - 2661453162; 09 - 260403523.— *GNLM*

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*

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 bed 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 Pakkoku 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 Htun, 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. — *Myitmakha 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.

An aged woman drinks charity water in a rural aea. PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

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*

Foreign ministers from ASEAN countries pose for photo in ASEAN way. PHOTO: FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTRY

ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Vientiane, Lao PDR concludes

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna 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*

Appointment of Mongolian Ambassador Agreed

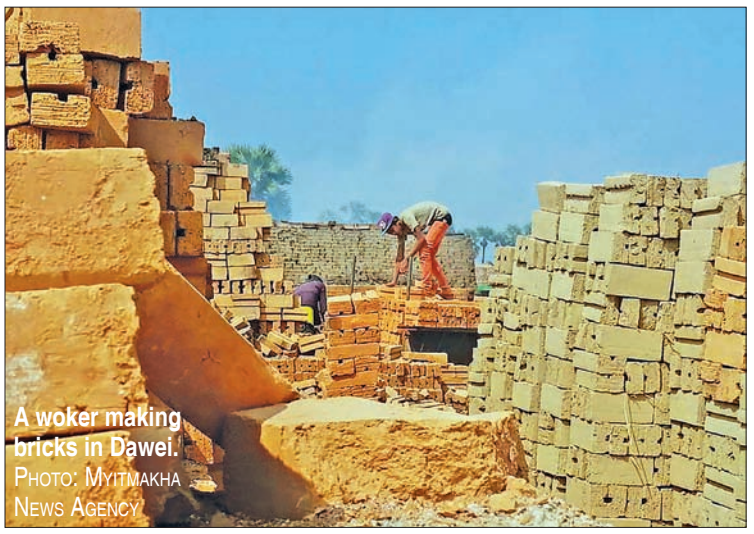
THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the appointment of Mr. Tugsbilguun Tumurkhuleg as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Mongolia to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar with residence in Bangkok, Thailand.

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 Turmurkhuleg 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*

Dawei building boom brings boon to brick makers


A woker making bricks in Dawei. PHOTO: MYITMAKHA NEWS AGENCY

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 Kyo, a brick manufacturer from Taung Min Pyaung 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 Sofia 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 apparatuses 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 aircon 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 1,776 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 the Pinlebu Township 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, negotiations were held at 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*

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.—*Htut Htut*

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

3 killed in Ygn-Mdy highway accidents in 2016

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

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 numbering 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 been educating drivers on road safety rules.—*GNLM*

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, Taungoo 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 Taungoo District Agricultural Department and U Wai Lin Aung, the head of the township's Agriculture Department, performed the practical demonstrations.—*Myint Oo*

Crime News

Man arrested for stealing phone

A MAN was arrested with a stolen mobile phone on Thursday in Chanmyathazi 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 Yimabin 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 Hsintae Village. The flames spread quickly, as homes in the area are positioned closely together.

Action is being taken against U Chit San by the Yinmabin 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 16th streets and 66th 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 Theikpan 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 Bawgagyi Jetty.

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

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.—*Tun Tun Htwe*

LOCAL Business

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 from among the country's top six banks by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Myanmar, said Daw Tin May Oo, a member of SECM, 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 fulfil 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.

U Yin Zaw Myo (L) of the YSX Joint-Venture Co Ltd, and U Than Cho (R), senior managing director of KBZ Bank Ltd exchange notes. PHOTO: MNA

Securities companies are required to ensure the sufficiency of funds in the accounts of each individual investor they work with.

"Currently, the system of the Yangon Stock Exchange is operating on a trial basis," said U Yin Zaw Myo. The bank has the widest network among private banks and has the digital integration necessary for a settlement bank, he said.

"We will serve buyers and sellers as soon as possible on the stock exchange," he said yesterday.

The Yangon Stock Exchange is slated to launch in March. It will be the country's first modern securities market.—*GNLM*

UMFCCI, Czech Chamber of Commerce sign MoU

Myanmar and Czech prepare to boost economic cooperation between the two countries. PHOTO: MNA

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 CzechMinister of Foreign AffairsLubomírZaorálek.

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*

International fuel jetty to be built in Mandalay

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 Phonetaw 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 watermelon are Daik Oo, Bago, Waw, Thanatpin, 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*

Farmers loading a bullock cart with watermelons.
PHOTO: AYE MIN SOE

Record-breaking South Korea filibuster runs beyond 100 hours

SEOUL — South Korean 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 parliament to pass the stalled security bill, part of tough action taken by her government amid heightened tension with North Korea following its test launch of a long-range rocket this month and its fourth nuclear test last month.

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

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. —*Reuters*

India'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 Inter-governmental 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 American Meteorological Society in August 2015. The IPCC mandates that every country tries to quantify how human activities are influencing 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. Swapna, a scientist at the IITM tells SciDev.Net.—*Reuters*

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Bangladeshi shrimp farming gets app-savvy

Shrimp farms. PHOTO: REUTERS

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 its marketing transparent, the QRC can trace all shrimp right from the larva stage supplied to farmers.

The QRC can be used in combination with another app, an American company SourceTrace's platform eServices 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 Ahmad, 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 European Union.

With a quick scan, consumers can learn the date of delivery, whether banned substances were used during the processing, if production complied with bio-safety rules, was environment-friendly and avoided using child labour.

Ahmad adds: "The traceability technology is actually used to get first-hand feedback on the MKA post-larvae from farmers, other shrimp value chain actors and field staff, so it is possible to identify improvement opportunities for larger scale business."

The initiative, supported by USAID and implemented by WorldFish, will run for the first five months of 2016, with SourceTrace providing the technology. As the programme expands it will benefit some 200,000 shrimp farmers in Bangladesh.

"To consumers, traceable shrimps would mean shrimp which can be traced back to a specific group of farmers who are responsible to provide shrimp that are free from all health hazards and that are produced in compliance with international labour law," the chief of the project, Erik H. J. Keus, tells SciDev.Net. "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*

G-20 finance chiefs agree to use all policy tools for market stability

Japan's Finance Minister Taro Aso (L) and Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda attend a press conference in Shanghai on 27 February 2016, after finance leaders from the Group of 20 major economies agreed to use "all policy tools — monetary, fiscal and structural —individually and collectively" to strengthen market stability and prop up sagging growth. PHOTO: KYODO NEWS

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 economic 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. —*Kyodo News*

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 temblors by 3 pm Sunday at the 1,317-metre volcano, the highest per day since it set up seismometres 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 to break even in coming years, will formalise a plan in 2017 to raise the official retirement age, China News Service reported yesterday, citing a senior government researcher.

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 about China's state pension having a severe funding shortage. Some estimate the cash shortfall could rise to be 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*

PICTURE OF THE DAY

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

OPINION

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 enrol their children for summer. Parental 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 education records, is that teachers have the responsibility to embrace and create an interactive 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 khinmaungaye.hotmail@gmail.com with your name and title.

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 Buddha Image from Kyauk Taw Township

Saw Mra Aung

OUT of innumerable Buddha images in Rakhine State, the Maha Myatmuni Buddha Image situated in Kyauk Taw Township is the most ancient and enjoys the greatest reputation. The mound where the pavilion housing this image is believed to have been the centre of Dhammavati City and the cradle of Theravada Buddhism in Rakhine State. The history of this image is closely associated with the visit of the Buddha to Dhannavati City of Rakhine region. Regarding it, Rakhine traditional chronicles run thus:

When the Buddha appeared in Majjhimadesa in the year 103 Maha Era, King Cadasuriya was reigning over Dhannavati, Rakhine Kingdom. One day, he knew from the merchants coming from Rajagaha that the Buddha was enlightened in Majjhimadesa. At the word 'Buddha', out of rapture, he fainted. Soon, he regained consciousness. Restless with the pricky thought of venerating the Buddha, he assembled all the wise ministers in the palace and sought advice from them. Finally, as suggested by a wise minister by the name of Deva Kyaw Vimala, he had a make-shift Vihara (Monastery) for the Buddha's stay and other pavilions for alms and preaching the Dhamma built on a sacred mound near the palace. Then, after vowing that he would not rise to his feet until the Buddha came, he invited the Buddha respectfully through his mind to his kingdom with incense-sticks lit and fragrant flowers offered, facing to the west where he knew the Buddha to be.

At that time, the Buddha in his twentieth Vassa (rains-retreat) was sojourning at the Veluvana Vihara donated by King Bimbisara in Rajagaha. When the Buddha, through his Dibbacakkhunana (Divine Eye), looked at the ten thousand universes, he saw that King Cadasuriya, who had been one of his close friends in a previous existence, was inviting him to his kingdom for alms. However, seeing that Dhannavati was nine hundred yojanas away from Rajagaha, he knew he had to go there through the sky. So the Buddha asked the Venerable Ananda, his personal attendant, to list the names of the disciples who wanted to accompany him there. When the Thera was doing as asked by the Buddha, Pandukambalasana (Yellow marble throne) of Sakka became hot and tense. When Sakka looked down at the Human Abode, he saw that the Buddha and his disciples were busy with the arrangement for so distant a journey. Therefore, Sakka in the company of Matali and Vissakamma descended to Rajagaha. At the bidding of Sakka, the two Devas created five hundred carriages decorated with tiered roofs. Then Sakka returned to Tavatimsa, leaving Matali and Vissakamma behind to be able to attend to all requirements. The two Devas kept vigilant watch throughout the night. It is said that the celestial carriage for the Buddha was embellished with four doors in a floral design, the carriages for Maha Savakas (Great disciples) with the two doors and carriages for other Arahats with one door each.

On the morning of Wednesday, the 8th waxing day of Kason in the year 123 Maha Era (580 B.C), the Buddha, accompanied by five hundred disciples in celestial carriages, went to Dannavati through the sky. This spectacular sight of the Buddha and his disciples travelling through the air in the rising sun cast a great spell on the people of Majjhimadesa and Dhannavati. Therefore, whosoever saw the sight could not help but pay reverence to them. On his arrival at the top of the Selagiripabbata hill on the right bank of the Gacchapanadi (Kalandan River) near Kyauk Taw , the Buddha , looking at the four cardinal directions, smiled to himself.

When the Venerable Ananda asked the Buddha about the reason of smiling, the Buddha answered, 'O Ananda, I have lived as a tuner in this mountain in a previous life. After my demise, successors to King Candasuriya will have a pagoda built here and my spine relic enshrined in it. That pagoda will later became known as Kyauk Taw Pagoda. In my innumerable past existences, I have lived at 246 localities within the boundary of this kingdom. So, after my demise, the succeeding Rakhine kings will have pagodas built at these localities and 48 kinds of my relics enshrined in them. The soil of this kingdom is always so fertile that it yields a rich supply of paddy. So the preceding Buddhas named it Dhannavati. Now, following the example of my predecessors, I will give the same name to it.'

At the end of the Buddha's words, the waves in the Gacchapanadi rose extremely high and earth trembled vehemently for three times in praise of them. The six rays of the Buddha shone forth brilliantly, prevailing over the whole world. Everyone was filled with unprecedented peace and serenity. They were so much surprised at the Buddha's unparallel glory that they paid homage to the Buddha from where they were. Due to these miracles, King Candasuriya, thinking that the Buddha had arrived, jumped from the seat where he had vowed and scurried up to the top of the Selagiripabbata hill. When he saw the Buddha in the flesh, he fell faint at the Buddha feet. Only when the Buddha showered his great compassion on him, he came round. Then the king paid obeisance to the Buddha with five kinds of touch and invited the Buddha and five hundred Arahats to the newly-built pavilion for alms. They were served milk porridge. Thereafter, the Buddha expounded a sutta (discourse)in appreciation of alms-offering. At the conclusion of the sutta, the king and ministers became Sotapannas (stream-winners). Queen Upparadevi and princess Surupa who were mature in perfections became Arahats. Thenceforth, the people of Rakhine became adherents to Buddhism.

Just before 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 the alloy to Sakka and Vissakamma and assigned them the task of casting an image bearing the exact resemblance to him. Much delighted, Sakka created a jeweled pavilion on the Sirikut mound at the southeastern corner of the city and celebrated a celestial occasion. It was jam-packed with Devas and Brahmas. Devas and human beings danced together in joy, playing various celestial musical instruments. Meanwhile, a shower of celestial flowers fell down from the sky. Out of amazement and gladness, the king and the people called out, "Well done, well done, well done."

Under the auspices of the Buddha, the image started to be cast on the night of Wednesday, the fullmoon day of Kalson, in the year 123 Maha Era and was completed at dawn the next day. After the image had been cast, the Buddha put into it seven handfuls of his breast-warmth. Once he did so, it became the very living image of the Buddha. It seemed as if the two Buddhas had appeared at the same time in Jambudipa. At that very instant, Devas from the six celestial planes sprinkled confetti down onto the earth. The people could see Devas and Brahmas with their own eyes. The earth shook echoingly in praise. When the Buddha was about to go to the palace for alms, the newly-cast Maha Myatmuni Image bore the air to stand and follow the Buddha. The Buddha then turned back and said, 'O my dear younger brother, be quiet. Don't stand up. Leave here to receive the veneration of the people for the full length of 5,000 years.' After partaking of the alms at the palace, the Buddha preached a sutta in appreciation of casting the Buddha image. Then the Buddha and his disciples proceeded to the southern part of Rakhine through the air on an itinerary.

In the past, domestic pilgrims and foreign tourists hardly visited Rakhine due to it difficult access and lack of security. However, nowadays, peace and security have prevailed in Rakhine State. The Sittway-Yangon High Way has appeared very recently. As Kyauk Taw is on the way from Sittwe -Yangon High Way, one can reach it easily by car. So, let me invite pilgrims, historians, scholars and foreign tourists to come and pay homage to this great MahaMyatmuni Image when an opportune occasion offers to you.

Expanded Meikhtila Lake bridge to open in March

Meikhtila Lake bridge seen with vehicles using teh new bridge side. PHOTO: TIN HLAING (MEIKHTILA)

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 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 is will be finished March. —*Tin Hlaing (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 seemed to be purposely under reported. The news has made headlines or special mention in every newspaper around 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 Malayan 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.

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 Myanma Petroleum Products Enterprise (MPPE), a combined team comprising members of the fire department, local police and Mandalay City Development Committee recently conducted a surprise check in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay Region.

The authorities carried out surprise checks at 18 fuel stations and mobile petroleum shops across the region, inspecting petroleum distribution licenses, fire safety measures and fuel management. During its inspections, the team found that some petroleum shops failed to make fire safety arrangements, including the installation of equipment to put out fires. The authorities have taken action against the shop owners and will educate them about fire prevention and safety.

Shops that have been found operating fuel distribution businesses 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.—*Ko Nay (Kyaukpadaung)*

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 Nahtogyi Township; coffee from Pyin Oo Lwin and Ywangan 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.—*Thiha Ko Ko*

Handicraft courses aim to empower rural community

THE Small-Scale Industries Department under the Ministry of Cooperatives has conducted handcraft 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)*

Trainess learning to male handicrafts. PHOTO: KO MYO LWIN (PHA-AN)

Clinton has one eye on Trump after huge win in South Carolina

Democratic US presidential candidate Hillary Clinton waves to supporters as she arrives at her South Carolina night at a primary night party in Columbia, South Carolina, on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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."

"Instead of building walls, 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" night 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 is a con man." —*Reuters*

NEWS IN BRIEF

Two former presidents of Mexico compare Trump to Hitler

MEXICO CITY — US Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump's political rhetoric is "racist," and evocative of Adolf Hitler, former Mexican President Felipe Calderon told reporters at an event in Mexico City on Saturday.

"This logic of praising the white supremacy is not just anti-immigration," Calderon said. "He is acting and speaking out against immigrants that have a different skin colour than he does, it is frankly racist and [he is] exploiting feelings like Hitler did in his time," Calderon said.

Trump has accused Mexico of sending rapists and drug runners across the US border and has said he will make Mexicans pay for a wall on the border. Felipe Calderon was president of Mexico from 2006-12.

Former Mexican President Vicente Fox, Calderon's predecessor, also compared Trump to Hitler in an interview with Anderson Cooper on CNN. "He reminds me of Hitler," Fox told Cooper on Friday.—*Reuters*

Miners trapped after accident in Russia's Arctic pronounced died

MOSCOW — The 26 miners who were trapped in a Russian coal mine above the Arctic circle have died and rescue operations have been halted after a third blast underground killed several rescue workers, emergency services said yesterday.

The miners were trapped on Thursday after a sudden leak of methane gas caused two blasts that led parts of the Severnaya mine in Vorkuta to collapse.

The mine is operated by Vorkutaugol, a subsidiary of Severstal.—*Reuters*

Air strike targets suspected IS militants near Libya's Bani Walid

TRIPOLI — Unidentified aircraft carried out air strikes on a convoy carrying suspected Islamic State militants near Libya's Bani Walid early yesterday, a member of the city council said.

Local forces and the United States have both used air strikes against militants in Libya. This month US war planes launched an air strike on a suspected Islamic State training camp in the western Libyan city of Sabratha, killing more than 40 people.

Islamist militants have taken advantage of political chaos and a security vacuum to expand their presence in Libya. Fighters loyal to Islamic State have taken control of the coastal city of Sirte, about 260km (160 miles) east of Bani Walid.—*Reuters*

Cuban sets new record for performing most consecutive ball touches with head while treading water

HAVANA — Cuban Jhoen Lefont on Saturday refreshed his old Guinness World Record feat with 1,513 consecutive football touches in a swimming pool at the Melia Cohiba hotel in the Cuban capital.

Lefont, 27 and a former water polo player, got a mention at the Guinness World Record for accomplishing 1,503 consecutive football touches with the head while treading water in ten minutes on 10 August, 2013, in the swimming pool of the Hotel Nacional de Cuba, Havana.

The official judges present officially confirmed Saturday's number, after checking videos from two cameras, one at water level and one underwater.—*Xinhua*

5.4-magnitude quake hits 16 km SW of Sarangani, Philippines — USGS

HONG KONG — An earthquake measuring 5.4 on the Richter scale jolted 16 km SW of Sarangani, Philippines at 09:06:26 GMT yesterday, the US Geological Survey said.

The epicenter, with a depth of 185.08 km, was initially determined to be at 5.2875 degrees north latitude and 125.3693 degrees east longitude.—*Xinhua*

Poland's ruling conservatives say files cast new shadow over Walesa

WARSAW — Newly-publicised documents have revived claims Lech Walesa, the giant of Poland's struggle to overthrow communism, was a secret police informant in the 1970s — allegations still fuelling an old feud among postcommunist leaders.

Poland's ruling conservatives, led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, have leapt at the opportunity to question Walesa's independence from the communist-era police after he became Poland's first democratically elected president between 1990 and 1995.

His defenders say that whatever the authenticity of the documents, they do little to undermine the record of a man who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

Walesa, 72, has said a batch of files found last week at the house of a late communist interior minister was 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 reformist partners 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 most 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 Gholamali 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 the industrialised, oil-exporting country.

The polls were seen by analysts as a potential turning point for Iran, where nearly 60 per cent of its 80 million population is under 30 and eager to engage with the world following the lifting of most sanctions.

"Based on the votes that we have so far it looks like the principlists will lose the majority in the next Majlis (parliament) shy of 50 per cent. The reformists gained 30 per cent and independent candidates did better than before, gaining 20 per cent," said Foad Izadi, an assistant professor at the Faculty of World Studies in Tehran University.

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 26 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

Principlists, otherwise known as hardliners, hold 65 per cent of the outgoing parliament and the rest is divided between reformists and independents who traditionally support Rouhani.

Izadi said the reformists' strong lead was prompted by Rouhani's success in reaching a nuclear agreement between Iran and international powers, the removal of most of the punitive sanctions that had strangled the country's economy over the past decade and restoration of relations with the West.

"It is a sweeping victory for Tehran but for other cities it is not yet clear cut. It is beyond expectations," he added.

Etemad, a reformist newspaper whose managing-editor Elias Hazrati won a seat in Tehran, has chosen the first headline of "clean up in the parliament."

"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 bodies 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 detente 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.

Two prominent hardliners were on course to be elected with lesser scores in the experts assembly race: Ahmad Jannati 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 including the Guardian Council, which vets all laws passed by parliament.—*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 US forces last week against police suspected of supporting Taliban insurgents in embattled Helmand province, Afghan officials said yesterday.

Reports of fighting between police and soldiers add to the upheaval in the southern province, long a stronghold of the insurgency, where the military has abandoned 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 Sarjang told Reuters.

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

The acting Sangin district police chief was among the detainees, Sarjang said.

Sarjang 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*

Afghan security forces inspect the site of a suicide attack in Kabul, Afghanistan on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: 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 the 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 of the inmates, but prosecutors say he was stationed directly on the path leading to the gas chambers.

According to initial investigations, Zafke did not deny having been an SS member at Auschwitz but he maintains not to have witnessed anything about the killings. The prosecutors say that, among being a witness to these gas chambers walks, he 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 Nazis' 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 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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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 mechanical functions. MPT advised that the old system will be replaced with modern MSAN Exchange urgently. Hence, the first three digits of the ILO's telephone have been changed. 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, Kanbae (Thitsar) Road Yankin township, Yangon, MYANMAR**
Telephone	:	**01 233 6538, 01 233 6539 01 578 925, 01 579 956**
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 59 036
Contact number in Mon State	: 09 42 11 75 562
Contact number in Chin State	: 09 45 26 59 346
Contact number in Mandalay Region	: 09 45 26 59 345
Contact number 24/7	: 09 45 26 59 344

Peace Project (Shan State)

Office address	:	**No # 14, Nawarat Road, Thittaw Ward, Taunggyi Township, Shan State (South)**
Contact number in Shan (South)	:	09 25 07 86 411

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

David Abramowitz, Humanity United

A Congolese worker separates coltan and cassiterite, or tin ore, in a mud hut at Numbi in eastern Congo on 24 July 2010. PHOTO: REUTERS

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 used and consumed here in the United States. Whether it is shrimp from Thailand, shirts made with cotton from Uzbekistan, or electronic devices made from coltan 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 use in chocolate, 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 and 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 presumption against 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*

Indian man allegedly kills 14 family members before committing suicide

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

The gruesome incident took place at Mumbai's Thane during early hours yesterday.

"We have recovered the bodies from the house and their throats have been silted 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 include 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 has sedated the family members before killing them one after another.—*Xinhua*

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-protester with a flagpole, said Anaheim Police Sergeant Daron 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 wounded was stabbed with 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 Klansmen arrived in a black SUV.

Counter protesters hold placards near a planned Ku Klux Klan rally in Anaheim, California on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

The vehicle pulled up and three men got out and began to unload signs when the group of about 50 counter-protesters 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 Dion Garcia, 37.

He said the angry mob chased the Klansmen 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.—*Reuters*

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 three upper floors of the six-story building collapsed in Anyuan District, Pingxiang 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 a function in Dhaka's Bangabandhu International Conference Centre (BICC) also known as Bangladesh China Friendship Conference Centre, Hasina inaugurated the development activities at the economic zones.

They are Mirersarai Economic Zone, Sabrang Tourism Park, Srihatta Economic Zone, Mongla Economic Zone, AK Khan Economic Zone, Abdul Monem Economic Zone, Meghna Economic Zone, Meghna Industrial Economic Zone, Bay Economic Zone and Amra 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.

"We've taken initiatives to establish economic zones in prospective regions with a view to encouraging industrialisation, generating employment opportunities, enhancing production and ensuring export promotion and diversification," Muhith said in his budget speech.

He noted that big investment initiatives such as those found in Japan, South Korea, China and India cannot be realised in the country due to scarcity of land. In order to change this scenario, approval has been accorded to the establishment of 30 public and private economic zones in different parts of the country, he added.

"I would like to inform you all that 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 special facilities.—*Xinhua*

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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 transgender actors won key awards.

“Spotlight,” about the Boson 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 significantly 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 is 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 Pakistani-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*

(L-R) Producers Michael Sugar, director Tom McCarthy, Blye Pagon Faust, Nicole Rocklin and Steve Golin pose backstage with their award for Best Feature for the film “Spotlight” during the 31st Independent Spirit Awards in Santa Monica, California on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: 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 prize. “Big Bang Theory” star Kaley Cuoco took worst supporting actress for her roles in both “Alvin and the Chipmunks 4: 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 mounted atop a mangled reel of Super 8 film. Spray-painted gold, it is said to have an estimated street value of $4.97.

But that, of course, doesn’t account for its potential value on eBay.—*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...”

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*

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 pilfered 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."

Pedroso 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.

A Lhasa Apso 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 24 February 2016.
PHOTO: REUTERS

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' smart phone 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*

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 has 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 daring to walk on a glass skywalk, 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 houses 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 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*

mitv Myanmar International

(29-2-2016 07:00am ~ 1-3-2016 7:00am) MST

Today Fresh

07:03	Am	News
07:27	Am	Pride of Myanmar - Bagan arts and handi crafts
07:41	Am	A Worth Studying Site For Ancient Myanmar Heritages
08:03	Am	News
08:26	Am	Pakhan Traditional Nat Festival In Kuni Village (Part-1)
08:50	Am	Philatelic Pleasure
09:03	Am	News
09:26	Am	Htan Taw Drums (Part-II) "Dobat"
09:42	Am	Equestrian Contest on Pa-O Land
09:52	Am	Chaung Tha Souvenir Business
10:03	Am	News
10:26	Am	Ngapali, Unique Spot To Relax
10:45	Am	Ywar Thit's Monhinkhar

(11:00 Am~03:00 Pm) -Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Pm ~07:00 Pm) -Today Repeat(07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

Prime Time

07:03	Pm	News
07:27	Pm	Food Trip (Ep-3) (Part-1)
07:50	Pm	Colourful Threads
08:03	Pm	News
08:26	Pm	Taste Of Myanmar (Noodle With Fermented Soya Bean)
08:43	Pm	Diary of a Fisherman

(09:00 Pm ~ 11:00 Pm)- Today Repeat (09:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(11:00 Pm~ 03:00 Am)-Sunday Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)
(03:00 Am ~ 07:00 Am) -Today Repeat (07:00 Am ~ 11:00 Am)

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

MRTV Entertainment Channel

(29-2-2016, Monday)

6:00 pm
- Alinka Wut Yee Music Troupe

6:20 pm
- Pyi Thu Ni Ti

6:35 pm
- Musical Programme

6:45 pm
- TV Drama Series

7:40 pm
- TV Drama Series

8:25 pm
- Dramatic Arts

9:30 pm
- Myanmar Video

From 29.2.2016 (Monday) 06:00 Pm
To 1.3.2016 (Tuesday) 06:00 Pm
This schedule will be repeated four times in 24 hours.

MRTV News Channel in Brief

(29-2-2016, Monday)

6:00 am
- Paritta by Venerable Mingun Sayadaw

7:35 am
- People's Talks

9:35 am
- Documentary (ASEAN)

10:35 am
- Weekly Entertainment

11:35 am
- MRTV's Youth Programme

12:35 pm
- TV Drama Series

1:20 pm
- Tasty Trip

3:15 pm
- 2016 University Entrance Examination (Physics)

4:35 pm
- University of Distance Education (TV Lecutures) First Years (Zoology)

5:35 pm
- Socio Economic Scenes

7:15 pm
- TV Drama Series

8:00 pm
- News / International News/ Weather Report

9:00 pm
- News
- TV Drama Series

Note/ Hourly News Bulletins (Local + International)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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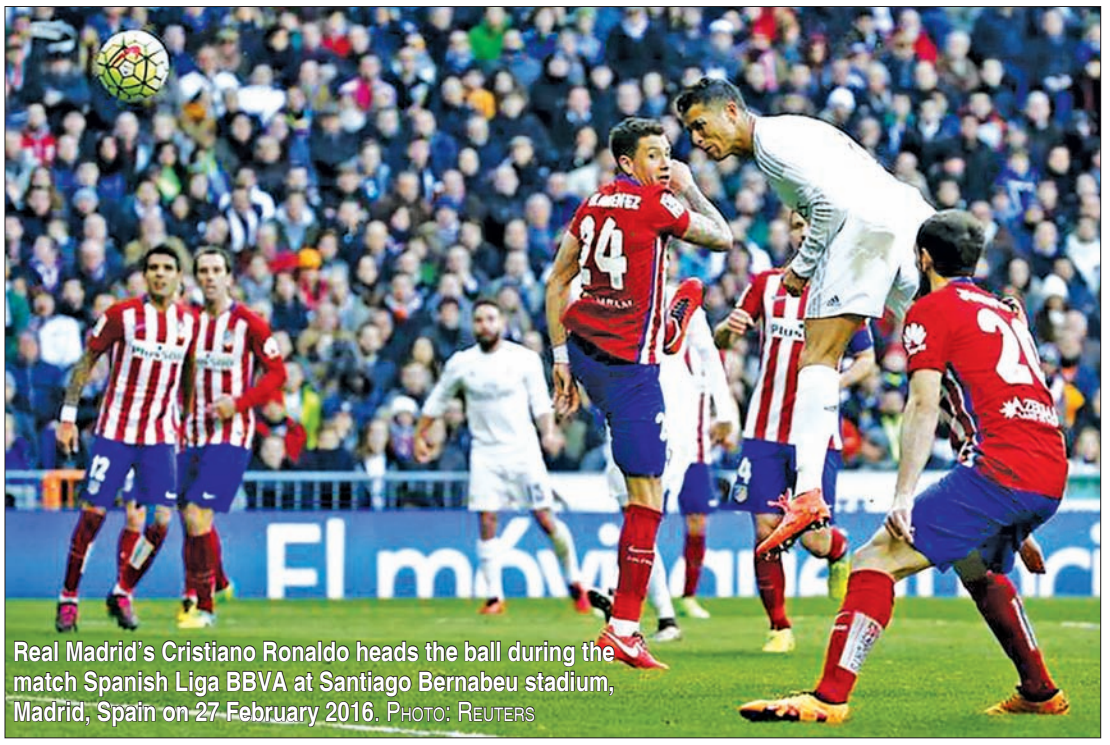
Monday, 29 February, 2016

Atletico derby win virtually buries Real Madrid



Real Madrid's Cristiano Ronaldo heads the ball during the match Spanish Liga BBVA at Santiago Bernabeu stadium, Madrid, Spain on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

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

France 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," Zidane 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 set 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, playing at left back in place of fellow Brazilian 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 until 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 surreal season, Ulloa's 89th-minute contribution, sliding in to knock home Marc Albrighton's cross, proved decisive for them.

It stretched Leicester's advantage 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 — they are not going to be easily deflected from their title ambitions.

Leonardo Ulloa celebrates after scoring the first goal for Leicester City during Barclays Premier League at King Power Stadium on 27 February 2016. PHOTO: REUTERS

"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 mentality." Chelsea also provided a rare reminder of their champions' 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 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, delighted that Chelsea had moved into 11th place under his soothing 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 returning 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*

Wawrinka wins Dubai title after marathon tiebreak

DUBAI — Stan Wawrinka edged out Cypriot Marcos Baghdatis in a nerve-jangling, near-30 minute tiebreak to secure the Dubai Duty Free Championship with a 6-4, 7-6(13) triumph on Saturday.

Wawrinka's path to victory had been eased by the retirements of world number one Novak Djokovic and Australian prospect Nick Kyrgios in the earlier rounds but the Swiss often toiled against surprise finalist Baghdatis, whom he beat for a sixth successive time.

World number four Wawrinka was gifted the first set by a Baghdatis double fault — his third of that game alone — and a tepid second set was notable for not featuring a single break point.

But then followed a 28-point tiebreak in which twice grand slam champion Wawrinka saved five set points before a Baghdatis backhand drifted long to give the Swiss a second title of the year following his victory in Chennai in January.

"It's been an amazing year. I'm playing my best tennis since a few years now so hopefully I can keep this level," Wawrinka said.

Baghdatis initially played serve and volley with aplomb, while Wawrinka's stinging backhand was lethal from the baseline, but that early assurance proved fleeting as both players made a catalogue of errors.

Wawrinka afforded Baghdatis two break points after whipping a forehand wide and the Cypriot converted following another wayward Swiss forehand for a 3-2 first-set lead. Wawrinka, who was within two points of suffering opening-round elimination at the Aviation Club, immediately broke back with a crosscourt winner past the advancing Baghdatis, who was seeking a first title since 2010. The pair were content to trade half-paced shots from the back of the court and when either did up the tempo it usually failed.

World number 57 Baghdatis, serving at 4-5, saved four set points but his serve deserted him again as he conceded the set.

The second set went with serve before an attritional tiebreak in which Baghdatis fluffed chances to square the match and Wawrinka threw his racket in frustration after missing an easy forehand. "It was a crazy tiebreak," added Wawrinka. "Until 6-6 I was always up with a mini break ... I did two or three quick mistakes. Then it starts to be all about nerves. You try to play simple, aggressive and it was good to finish in two sets."—*Reuters*

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