PREPAREDNESS, QUICK RESPONSE KEY TO SOLVING WATER SHORTAGE IN SUMMER PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sends Message of Greetings to 47th Anniversary of Mon State Day

Esteemed national, ethnic parents, brethren and people in Mon State:

First, I have much honour and pleasure to convey this message of greetings on the occasion of the 47th Anniversary of Mon State Day, which falls today, 19 March 2021. I wish for all Union-born nationalities and Mon ethnic brethren full of auspiciousness and well-being.

Formerly, Mon State was embodied within the Taninthayi Division (1). Taninthayi Division (1) was historically recorded on 19 March as Mon State in Section 30 Article (c) of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma Constitution (1974). Since then, 19 March was designated and celebrated as "Mon State Day" year after year until it has been 47 years now.

Mon nationalities have been living in weal and woe together with other fellow ethnic brethren. Joining hands in solidarity with other national races, Mon nationalities, with Union spirit, have been taking part in regaining Independence and upholding sovereignty both during the colonial times and after the Independence struggle. Mon people possess a high-calibre culture and lengthy history. By constantly preserving such noble historical significance, national races are most importantly required to coexist in solidarity for the Union's sustainability, State stability and tranquillity and eternal peace.

Mon and Bamar are the majority population of the Mon State. Still, other nationalities such as Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Rakhine, Shan and Pa-O are also living together peacefully in the state. Mon State has a fair climate and green scenery full of forests, rivers, creeks and plane sandy beaches. Mon State is one of the states and regions that has developed an invaluable and unique cultural heritage for ages. Such entities should be more enhanced towards the development of the country. Based on the genuine spirit of the Union, people participation and collaborative efforts in solidarity are of vital importance for the development of the nation. Hence, we can successfully build a Union based on the democracy and federal system we all aspire for.

When we look back on our background history, there have been bitter experiences triggered by the blow of political disputes among Myanmar society since the onset of Independence. National brethren could not have negotiated and settled their political differences and distrust among one another. Consequently, it has been still far away from internal peace up till now. Successive governments have been sparing no effort in various ways to resolve the armed conflicts that erupted among national, ethnic brethren. However, they could not have politically solved the pivotal issues -- political disputes. It entails no cessation of armed conflicts yet.

These decades-long political disputes have left us behind our neighbouring countries regarding our political and socio-economic spheres. Nowadays, lessons should be learned from those bitter experiences to cease controversies. It is high time for all nationalities shall join hands in hands with one another, whenever

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18th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-18) held via video conferencing

State Administration Council Chairman Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing participates in the 18th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-18) through video conferencing from Nay Pyi Taw on 18 March 2021.

THE 18th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-18) took place yesterday morning via video conferencing.

The meeting was attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Chief of Staff (Army) Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun and Chief of Military Affairs Security Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces Major-General Dato Seri Pahlawan Haji Hamzah Bin Haji Sahat and delegation, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces General Vong Pisen and delegation, Chief of Staff of the Indonesian National Armed Forces Lieutenant-General Ganip Warsito and delegation, Acting Chief of General Staff Department of Laos Ministry of National Defence Major-General Chanthong Sontaath and delegation, Commander-in-Chief of Malaysian Armed Forces General Tan Sri Dato Hj Affendi bin Buang and delegation, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Philippine Armed Forces Lieutenant-General Erickson R. Gloria and delegation, Chief of Defence Force of Singapore Lieutenant-General Melvyn Ong and delegation, Chief of Defence Forces of the Royal Thai Armed Forces General Chalermphon Srisawasdi and delegation and Vice-Chief of Staff of the People's Army of Viet Nam Senior Lieutenant-General Nguyen Phuong Nam and delegation.

First, the Commander of Royal Brunei Armed Forces, who chaired the ACDFM-18, delivered an opening speech.

Next, Chairman of AMIM-18 Colonel Haji Mohammad Muluddin Bin Awang Haji Latif of Royal Brunei Armed Forces and Chairman of 11th AMOM Brigadier-General Haji Abdul Razak bin Haji Abdul Kadir of Royal Brunei Armed Forces read meeting reports.

Then, the military delegates from ASEAN countries made their discussions in alphabetical order and expressed their opinions about the title "We care, We prepare, We prosper." In his discussion, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing wished all those in attendance to be free from all forms of dangers amid the Covid-19 crisis. He said with competition from the world's powerful countries, and geographically strategic location, the ASEAN region is facing conventional

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Announcement of Union Election Commission
18 March 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of Thakayta, Bahan, Thanlyin, Kyauktan and Hmawby townships in Yangon Region.
2. Findings in each township were as follows:

Findings on voter lists in each township

Sr	Township and numbers of polling stations	Township sub-commission	List from Immigration department	Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards	Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC	Those involved in voter list more than two times holding one CSC
1	211 polling stations in Thakayta Township of Yangon Region	174,751	139,647	11,119	235	8,860
2	65 polling stations in Bahan Township of Yangon Region	672,22	36,778	1,411	3	1,302
3	229 polling stations in Thanlyin Township of Yangon Region	222,275	1764,54	33,635	675	13,844
4	192 polling stations in Kyauktan Township of Yangon Region	132,208	113,651	18,017	118	4,656
5	175 polling stations in Hmawby Township of Yangon Region	199,474	109,910	26,280	688	13,102

3. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Thakayta, Bahan, Thanlyin, Kyauktan and Hmawby townships in Yangon Region, together with the respective township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrator according to the Hluttaw Election Law Section 53.
4. According to the ground inspection, a total of 872 polling stations of these five townships took out 874,385 ballots and used 572,373. It left 267,506 ballots instead of 302,012. The difference was 48,752 ballots and it found 14,246 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective poll stations. The extra ballots were found and so the ballots were printed illegally. The findings in each township are as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in each township

Sr	Subject	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Thakayta	211	196,178	120,130	76,048	62,691	19,539	6,182
2	Bahan	65	72,447	42,636	29,811	21,741	9,021	951
3	Thanlyin	229	242,389	157,886	84,503	77,447	8,032	976
4	Kyauktan	192	151,468	102,221	49,247	44,118	6,511	1,382
5	Hmawby	175	211,903	149,500	62,403	61,509	5,649	4,755
	Total	872	874,385	572,373	302,012	267,506	48,752	14,246

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Thakayta Township

5. According to the inspection, a total of 211 polling stations in 19 Wards of Thakayta Township took out 196,178 ballots and used 120,130 ballots. It found 19,539 ballots missing and 6,182 extra ballots. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/Village-tract ballots	186,786	118,077	68,709	52,302	19,539	3,132
2	Township advance ballots	1,492	2,053	-561	412		973
3	Township remaining	7,900		7,900	9,977		2,077
Total		196,178	120,130	76,048	62,691	19,539	6,182

6. Of 211 polling stations of Thakayta Township, the extra township advance ballots and township reserve ballots were found at 31 polling stations. The ballots were missing at 142 polling stations. The extra/shortage ballots were found as follows:

Sr	Ward	Polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Industry	2	3,100	2,040	1,060	887	173	
2	No (1) Anawmar	14	16,050	9,096	6,954	5,050	1,904	
3	No (1) Htuparyone	11	10,850	6,428	4,422	2,662	1,760	
4	No (2) Ward (south)	5	4,950	3,479	1,471	2,047	185	761
5	No (2) Ward (north)	11	11,150	6,900	4,250	2,903	1,347	
6	No (3) Yan Pyay	8	8,650	6,427	2,223	2,773	250	800
7	No (3) Man Pyay	12	11,036	5,923	5,113	2,171	2,942	
8	No (4) Ward (south)	7	5,650	4,105	1,545	2,035	100	590
9	No (4) Ward (north)	8	5,250	3,641	1,609	479	1,130	
10	No (5) Ward	3	2,850	2,224	626	384	242	
11	No (6) Ward (east)	8	5,100	3,447	1,653	830	873	50
12	No (6) Ward (west)	9	7,300	4,551	2,749	1,919	830	
13	No (7) Ward (east)	13	12,900	7,973	4,927	2,399	2,572	44
14	No (7) Ward (west)	4	4,350	2,463	1,887	639	1,248	
15	No (8) Ward	16	13,550	7,668	5,882	3,645	2,237	
16	No (9) Ward	8	7,150	4,949	2,201	2,411	76	286

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Operations of some organizations are being scrutinized whether they are running their operations in accordance with rules and regulation or whether the foreign finance and assistance they received are legal or illegal

OPERATIONS of some organizations are being scrutinized whether they are running their operations in accordance with rules and regulation or whether the foreign finance and assistance they received are legal or illegal. Action is being taken against the Committee Representing the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which is illegally carrying out activities while the new Union Election Committee is launching an investigation into vote-rigging. Domestic tourism, hotels, factories and workshops have been allowed to resume their operations in accordance with COVID-19 prevention rules and regulations. Relevant ministries have been instructed to take action against physicians, specialists and staff who are taking part in the CDM. It is important to take measures not to develop staff housings, special economic zones and industrial zones on agricultural land, to prevent the use of agricultural land for other purposes and to push for rural development.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 2 March 2021)

47-member Sangha committee concludes 6th and 7th meeting

THE sixth and seventh meeting of the 47-member leading committee of the 8th State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee has successfully concluded at the Maha Pathana Cave in Thiri Mingalar Kaba Aye Hill Yangon yesterday.

The meeting was attended by the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee members led by Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Bhamo Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa.

Also present at the meeting were Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, the Permanent Secretary, the Director-General and the Deputy Director-General from the Department of Religious Affairs, the Pro-Rector of the International Theravada Buddhist Missionary University (ITBMU) and other relevant officials.

The sixth and seventh meeting of the 47-member Sangha committee seen in progress in Yangon yesterday.

The Chairman Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee presided over the meeting, and Joint Secretary Sayadaw of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee Bhaddanta Dhammasarya (Agga Maha Ganthavacaka Pandita) acted as the master of the ceremony.

The meeting was organized into eight programmes. The duties and responsibilities of the sub-committee of the State Sangha Maha Nayaka were handed over to the first sub-committee under the rules and regulations of the Sangha.

The family of U Htin Aung and Daw Thida Aung donated offertories to the State Sangha Maha Nayaka Sayadaws, who came to the meeting yesterday. —MNA

18th ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM-18) held via video conferencing

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security challenges as well as unconventional security challenges such as climate change, scarce resources, natural disasters, irregular migrant worker issue, food scarcity, human trafficking, drug smuggling, information security, piracy, transnational crime, terrorism and pandemic.

Among unconventional security challenges, terrorism and the Covid-19 global pandemic pose a major threat to the whole ASEAN region. So, it would be more effective and successful for the ASEAN countries to seek a solution in a concerted and coordinated effort rather than in an individual effort. Immigration and administrative weaknesses, lack of complete monitoring of illegal cash flow, rampant drug smuggling, which is the major income source of terrorists in the region, and mass accumulation of weapons from other regions are major obstacles to fighting terrorism in the ASEAN region.

The Covid-19 global pandemic has changed the lives of the eight billion people of the world a lot. The governments and the peoples of the relevant countries have to take into account the new normal life. The pandemic has much impact on the socio-economic sector, causing a rise in the poverty rate, an increase in hardships of women, delays in the education sector, hurting the social security, putting the IDPs in harm's way and people of the rural areas at high risk of infection, reducing income, generating joblessness, shrinking the global trade, causing food scarcity, and prompting a sharp drop in the tourism industry.

Hence, ASEAN member states need an enhancement in their respective healthcare undertakings, an effective programme to fulfil the needs and guarantee rights of the persons who are facing socio-economic losses, the adoption of long-term remedial measures and policies, and the participation of the armed forces of the relevant countries in the functions of the Covid-19 response teams and committees to alleviate the consequences of the global pandemic and to prevent and control the virus.

In accord with the theme of the meeting "We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper" ASEAN countries must foresee all conventional and unconventional challenges and must have a careful analysis of them, must make preparatory measure to collectively overcome them, and must share the results achieved through the collective efforts as they are must-do programmes.

The meeting then discussed the paper on ASEAN Military Exercise (AMX), approved the Two Year Working Plan (2021-2023) of the ASEAN armed forces, held final discussions on the joint statement of the ACDFM-18 and approve it.

Then the chair of the ACDFM-18, the commander of the Royal Brunei Armed Forces, gave the closing speech and transferred the alternate chairmanship duty to the commander-in-chief of the Royal Armed Forces of Cambodia, who gave the acceptance speech. The meeting then came to a successful conclusion. —MNA

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing sends Message of Greetings to 47th Anniversary of Mon State Day

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bad times and good times, to coexist and undertake eternal peace all over the country.

The State Administration Council has been making efforts to build good foundations for the State to move forward steadfastly on the democracy path. In this regard, it has laid down five future programmes and nine political, economic and social objectives in line with the prevailing circumstances.

One crucial point of the objectives, as mentioned earlier, is to follow the customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding cultural heritage and national characters. Thus, the State government emphasizes implementing it.

In conclusion, I am conveying this Message of Greetings on the occasion of the 47th Anniversary Mon State Day with my sincere wishes for all ethnic nationalities, including Mon, Bamar, Kayin, Pa-O, good health and prosperousness, and for their successful implementation in unison of the benefits towards Mon State and the Union.

MoHS Union Minister inspects hospitals in Nay Pyi Taw

Union Minister Dr Thet Khine Win makes an inspection tour around hospitals in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

UNION Minister for Health and Sports Dr Thet Khine Win inspected Eyes, Ears, Nose, Throat and Head surgical operation Hospital, Pobbathiri General Hospital and Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed) in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

The Union Minister and party firstly inspected Nay Pyi Taw Eyes, Ears, Nose, Throat and Head surgical operation Hospital and instructed the patients' necessary things.

The outpatient department for eyes is daily open. Operations are conducted on Tuesday/Thursday noon together with other ears/nose patients. The outpatient department for ears/nose is opened on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

Then, the Union Minister met the specialists, nurses and medics and appreciated their efforts in providing medical treatments to the patients. He also highlighted healthcare workers' role, effective use of allocated funds to ease public health expenses, and plans to reward the healthcare staff depending on their degrees and food aids for night shift duty men.

The Union Minister and party then went to Pobbathiri General Hospital and inspected the COVID-19 vaccination programmes for the elderly at the age of over 60.

During his inspection, the Union Minister added the plans to ease travel restrictions for those vaccinated twice, public participation in vaccination programmes to achieve the everyday living style, as usual, procurement of COVID-19 vaccine with the State Fund and other preparations after getting the vaccine.

The Union Minister then went to Nay Pyi Taw General Hospital (1000-bed) and inspected the emergency department.

He then inspected the lab/blood donation bank of the hospital and met with the patients at the ICU.

He also discussed with the Superintendent, nurses, and healthcare staff to provide healthcare services for the public. He stressed the need to consider whether leaving the duties and patients are right and respecting ethics. The Union Minister also highlighted some proper allowance for healthcare services. —MNA

Request to Public

1. Democracy practices have granted the public freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason of human rights, some persons are now under pressured, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnish the image of democracy.
2. For preventing destructive actions against stability of the State, safety of the public and the rule of law, it is also required to proper actions in line with the law.
3. All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of the country and people.

Notification to Public

The pensioners, who have been withdrawing their retirement income at Myanma Economic Bank through Wave Pay and MPT Pay, due to current circumstances, will be able to withdraw pensions for March via e-Pension card at the branches of Myanma Economic Bank starting from 22 March 2021.

In order to prevent COVID-19 infection, it is informed that it can be easily withdrawn during banking hours on the following business days instead of a single day withdrawal on 22 March 2021.

Myanma Economic Bank

Military medical corps provide healthcare in township hospitals

Local people seen under healthcare services provided by Tatmadaw medical crops.

THE Tatmadaw medical teams consisted of Tatmadaw doctors, specialists, and nurses, have been providing necessary medical treatments to the patients in military hospitals and public hospitals.

The Tatmadaw medical team continued to provide healthcare services such as surgery, dental and oral healthcare, osteoporosis, obstetrics, gynaecology, hypertension and heart disease to the patients in Thazi Township Hospital, Hanzada hospital, Yinmabin hospital, Tagaung Public Hospital in Thabeikkyin Township, Sintgaing hospital in Kyaukse township, Yintaw hospital in Pyawbwe township, Kyauktaga Public Hospital, Donzayit hospital in Shwegyin Township and Latpadan township hospital yesterday.

Officials from respective commands also inspected the hospitals' medical services. They comforted the patients by providing food aids and necessary things. Locals are reportedly satisfied with the medical support of Tatmadaw. — MNA

Announcement of Union Election Commission

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17	No (10) Ward (south)	22	15,050	8,832	6,218	4,859	1,410	51
18	No (10)Ward (north)	7	5,600	3,905	1,695	1,823	122	250
19	Shu Khin Thar	5	6,000	3,554	2,446	2,608	138	300
	Total	173	156,536	97,605	58,931	42,524	19,539	3,132

20	Township advance ballots	1,492	2,053	-561	412		973
21	Township reserve ballots	7,900		7,900	9,977		2,077
Total		165,928	99,658	66,270	52,913	19,539	6,182

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Bahan Township

7. According to the inspection, a total of 65 polling stations in 22 Wards of Bahan Township took out 72,447 ballots and used 42,636 ballots. It left 21,741 ballots instead of 29,811. The extra/shortage ballots ballots were found as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/Village-tract ballots	66,950	41,476	25,474	17,404	9,021	951
2	Township advance ballots	1,160	1,160	-	-	-	-
3	Township remaining	4,337	-	4,337	4,337	-	-
Total		72,447	42,636	29,811	21,741	9,021	951

8. It found 9,021 ballots missing and 951 extra ballots at 65 polling stations in 22 Wards of Bahan Township. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Saya San North East	5,050	3,413	1,637	984	702	49
2	Sayan San North West	5,100	3,621	1,479	1,140	467	128
3	Kyaikasan	5,900	3,301	2,599	1,499	1,150	50
4	Saya San	3,850	2,509	1,341	1,491		150
5	Saya San Taung	6,200	4,273	1,927	2,134	11	218
6	Bo Sein Mhan	3,250	1,739	1,511	462	1,049	
7	Middle Shwegondine	1,600	1,170	430	280	150	
8	Thathana Yeik Tha	1,600	1,171	429	429	13	13
9	Shwe Taung Kyar(1)	3,000	2,036	964	214	807	57
10	Shwe Taung Kyar (2)	3,800	1,903	1,897	602	1,295	
11	East Shwegondine	1,700	1,041	659	659	50	50
12	West Shwegondine	2,050	989	1,061	930	131	
13	Kyar Taw Ya	750	100	650	-	650	
14	Yay Tar Shay	4,500	2761	1739	1,585	154	
15	Ngar Htet Kyi South	3,750	2,090	1,660	740	946	26
16	Ngar Htet Kyi West	1,150	768	382	32	350	
17	Ngar Htet Kyi North	600	387	213	223		10
18	Bo Cho (1)	2,100	1,280	820	874	46	100
19	Bo Cho (2)	3,200	1,870	1,330	1,130	200	
20	Myoma	2,400	1,632	768	768	50	50
21	Shwe Nantha	2,250	1,738	512	562		50
22	Ko Min Ko Chin	3,150	1,684	1,466	666	800	
	Ward/Village-tract total	66,950	41,476	25,474	17,404	9,021	951
	Township advance ballots	1,160	1,160				
	Township remaining ballots	4,337		4,337	4,337		
	Township total	72,447	42,636	29,811	21,741	9,021	951

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Thanlyin Township

9. According to the inspection, a total of 45 polling stations in 17 Wards of Thanlyin Township and 28 village-tracts took out 242,389 ballots and used 157,886 ballots. It left only 77,447 ballots instead of 84,503. The extra/shortage ballots ballots were found as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/Village-tract ballots	230,100	155,052	75,048	67,992	8,032	976
2	Township advance ballots	12,289	2,834	9,455	9,455	-	-
3	Township remaining ballots	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		242,389	157,886	84,503	77,447	8,032	976

10. It found 8,032 ballots missing and 976extra ballots at 45 polling stations in 17 Wards and 28 village-tracts of ThanlyinTownship. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/village-tract	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Myo Haung West	4,250	2,815	1,435	1,435		
2	Myo Haung Middle	2,750	1,979	771	675	96	
3	Myo Haung East	10,650	7,049	3,601	2,209	1,392	
4	Thauk Taw Kwin	4,750	2,814	1,936	1,741	195	
5	Oak Pho Su	4,400	2,794	1,606	1,165	441	
6	Amhu Htan	7,850	5,045	2,805	2,100	705	
7	Bago Su	4,150	3,100	1,050	900	150	
8	Htan Pin Gone	2,950	2,175	775	678	97	
9	Myo Thit East	1,100	812	288	188	100	
10	Myo Thit Middle	700	482	218	218		
11	Myo Thit West	450	346	104	104		
12	Myo Ma South	4,400	3,239	1,161	834	327	
13	Myo Ma North	1,150	844	306	316		10
14	Aung Mingalar	2,000	1,430	570	564	6	
15	Dar Gar	5,250	3,682	1,568	1,448	120	
16	Yay Nan	2,000	1,614	386	385	1	
17	Aung Chan Tha	9,450	6,339	3,111	3,377		266
18	Win Kha Nee village tract	950	824	126	126		
19	Phar Kuu (east) village tract	3,600	2,677	923	823	100	
20	Par Kuu (west) village tract	1,700	1,363	337	237	100	
21	Day Zett village tract	2,100	1,534	566	564	2	
22	Yone Thabyay Kan village tract	2,450	1,711	739	639	100	
23	Mingalun village tract	3,400	2,527	873	481	392	
24	Baw Thabyay Kan village tract	3,550	2,528	1,022	1,022		
25	Kayin Seik village tract	3,200	2,284	916	876	40	

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Announcement of Union Election Commission

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Sr	Ward/village-tract	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
26	Thabyay Kone village tract	2,050	1,847	203	252		49
27	Bagan Taung village tract	2,450	1,966	484	484		
28	Alun Soke village tract	7,250	4,695	2,555	2,454	101	
29	Kyaung Kone Seikkyi (or) Jamar village tract	11,100	9,165	1,935	1,733	202	
30	Lat Yet San village tract	18,500	13,257	5,243	3,362	1881	
31	Tha Htay Kwin village tract	2,350	1,837	513	523		10
32	Sit Pin Kwin village tract	2,100	1,710	390	386	4	
33	Bayet village tract	1,300	1,114	186	187		1
34	Ngar Byay Ma village tract	1,600	1,309	291	291		
35	Nga/Pa village tract	3,100	2,440	660	716		56
36	Thanet Pin village tract	650	520	130	130		
37	Bogyoke village tract	20,150	13,460	6,690	7,247		557
38	Nyaung Thone Pin village tract	6,900	4,002	2,898	2,388	510	
39	Phaya Gone village tract	51,200	27,738	23,462	22,622	840	
40	La Har Yet village tract	1,650	1,288	362	389		27
41	Kadat Phyar village tract	1,400	1,033	367	277	90	
42	Nyung Lay Pin village tract	1,750	1,425	325	325		
43	Kala Wel village tract	3,200	2,367	833	793	40	
44	Say Lone Gyi Village tract	1,050	910	140	140		
45	Chaung Sauk village tract	1,150	962	188	188		
Ward/village-tract total		230,100	155,052	75,048	67,992	8,032	976
Township advance ballots		12,289	2,834	9,455	9,455		
Township total		242,389	157,886	84,503	77,447	8,032	976

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in Kyauktan Township

11. According to the inspection, a total of 192 polling stations in 58 Wards of Kyauktan Township took out 151,468 ballots and used 102,221 ballots. The extra/shortage ballots ballots were found in each ward/village-tract. It left 44,118 ballots instead of 49,247. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/Village-tract ballots	148,750	101,636	47,114	41,985	6,511	1,382
2	Township advance ballots	585	585	-	-	-	-
3	Township remaining ballots	2,133	-	2,133	2,133	-	-
Total		151,468	102,221	49,247	44,118	6,511	1,382

12. A total of 6511 ballots were missing at 192 polling stations in 58 wards of Kyauktan Township and 1382 extra ballots were found at ward/village-tract sub-commission.

13. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/village-tract	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	East Ward	3	2,800	2,039	761	613	148	
2	Middle Ward	2	1,250	943	307	457		150
3	Western Ward	5	4,000	2,951	1,049	1,254		205
4	Sin Kan Ward	6	5,850	4,169	1,681	1,731		50
5	Shwe Gone Ward	7	8,300	5,763	2,537	1,825	712	
6	San Chain Mhee Ward	6	6,550	4,394	2,156	2,033	123	
7	Thida Myine Ward	3	3,200	2,075	1,125	1,005	120	
8	Shwe Pyi Thayar Ward	4	3,950	2,431	1,519	1,119	400	
9	Aye Mya Thida Ward	2	1,550	1,131	419	266	153	
10	Kan Pyaung Village-tract	4	2,800	2,214	586	590		4
11	P Lat Khet Village-tract	2	1,600	943	657	554	103	
12	Kyone Kan Village-tract	3	1,950	1,444	506	556		50
13	Wal Gyi Village-tract	4	2,400	1,790	610	560	50	
14	Ywar Thit Gyi Village-tract	2	1,350	736	614	414	200	
15	Kyan Pin Village-tract	2	1,600	1,134	466	466		
16	Thaung Gyi Village-tract	1	700	568	132	132		
17	Asel Village-tract	3	2,300	1,587	713	493	220	
18	Thana Pwint Chin Village-tract	2	1,250	859	391	541		150
19	Baw Ga Lut Village-tract	3	1,400	943	457	607		150
20	Chaung Wa Village-tract	3	1,900	1,346	554	305	249	
21	Nyaung Wine Village-tract	7	8,400	5,571	2,829	2,629	200	
22	Yay Kyaw Village-tract	4	2,550	1,818	732	531	201	
23	Kyar Kyan Village-tract	2	1,650	1,198	452	302	150	
24	Par Da Gyi Village-tract	3	2,900	2,189	711	561	150	
25	U Yin Village-tract	2	1,450	1,110	340	290	50	
26	Shwe Pyauk Village-tract	6	6,350	4,479	1,871	1,379	492	
27	Pan Taw Village-tract	5	3400	2,470	930	934		4
28	No (1) Ward	3	1,850	1,303	547	539	8	
29	No (2) Ward	4	2,650	1,731	919	575	344	
30	No (3) Ward	2	1,550	1,195	355	407		52
31	No (4) Ward	3	2,050	1,521	529	389	140	
32	Kayin Chaung Village-tract	2	1,350	874	476	526		50
33	Zwe Ka Nar Village-tract	2	1,550	520	1,030	680	350	
34	Minga Lun Village-tract	6	5,100	3,473	1,627	1,428	199	
35	Na Ywal Village-tract	2	1,450	930	520	470	50	
36	Sit Ta Pin Village-tract	1	400	285	115	115		
37	Mya Kine Village-tract	4	2,700	1770	930	730	200	
38	Boe Ba Village-tract	2	1,050	621	429	229	200	
39	Kwa Hnee Village-tract	3	2,050	1,421	629	685		56
40	Zwe Bar Kone Tan Village-tract	3	2,150	1,453	697	859		162
41	Ywar Thit Kalay Village-tract	4	2250	1617	633	583	50	
42	Mee Pya Village-tract	6	4,900	2,967	1,933	2,133		200
43	Kamar Kalote Village-tract	5	4,250	2,997	1,253	1,051	202	
44	Kalar Tan Village-tract	4	3,050	1,856	1,194	1,094	100	
45	Kha Naung Village-tract	5	3150	2,297	853	653	200	
46	Sin Ma Kaw Village-tract	2	1300	983	317	314	3	
47	Pan Chaung Village-tract	1	800	595	205	254		49
48	Tar Pet Village-tract	3	1,400	995	405	455		50
49	Zee Phyu Pin Village-tract	1	600	460	140	140		
50	Kadappana Village-tract	2	1,650	1,186	464	414	50	
51	Win Gyi Village-tract	2	1,200	729	471	371	100	
52	Sit Tan Village-tract	5	2,850	1,881	969	917	52	

53	Potta Lote Village-tract	5	3,350	2,101	1,249	1,161	88	
54	Mayan Bay Village-tract	4	2,200	1,379	821	719	102	
55	Shan Chaung Village-tract	3	2,450	1,657	793	593	200	
56	Tuu Myaung Village-tract	2	950	629	321	321		
57	Taman Gyi Village-tract	3	1,950	1,137	813	711	102	
58	Aung Chan Tha Village-tract	2	1,150	778	372	322	50	

	Total Ward	192	148,750	101,636	47,114	41,985	6,511	1,382
	Township advance ballots		585	585	-	-	-	-
	Township remaining ballots		2,133	-	2133	2133	-	-
	Township total		151,468	102,221	49,247	44,118	6,511	1,382

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in Hmawby Township

14. According to the inspection, a total of 175 polling stations in 4 Wards and 39 village-tracts of Hmawby Township took out 211,903 ballots and used 149,500 ballots. It left 61,509 ballots instead of 62,403. The extra/shortage ballots ballots were found as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village-tract ballot	203,700	147,220	56,480	52,332	5,649	1,501
2	Township ballot	8,203	2,280	5,923	9,177	-	3,254
Total		211,903	149,500	62,403	61,509	5,649	4,755

15. It found 5,649 ballots were missing and 1501 extra ballots at 175 polling stations in 4 Wards and 39 village-tract in Hmawby township. The township sub-commission had 9,177 ballots instead of 5,923 and so the extra ballots were 3,254.

16. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/Village-tract	Polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	No (1) Ward	4	3,950	3,041	909	965		56
2	No (2) Ward	5	7,650	5,238	2,412	2,412	100	100
3	No (3) Ward	2	2,200	1610	590	590		
4	No (4) Ward	7	7,950	6,125	1,825	1,853	24	52
5	Hla Pa Dar village-tract	3	3,450	2,811	639	689		50
6	Min village-tract	3	2,850	2,264	586	586		
7	Pat Tan Village-tract	2	2,100	1,770	330	430		100
8	Shwe Hlay Gyi Village-tract	1	1,200	1,008	192	142	50	
9	Pathi Village-tract	2	1,150	910	240	245		5
10	Chaung Wa Village-tract	3	1,100	847	253	203	50	
11	Hmawby Chaung Wa Village-tract	3	2,700	2,258	442	443	7	8
12	Hnaw Gone Village-tract	3	3,150	2,366	784	784		
13	Bant Bway Gone Village-tract	2	3,250	2,642	608	608		
14	Lal Ngoke Chaung Village-tract	8	6,850	5,289	1,561	1,562		1
15	Phoo Gyi Village-tract	7	6,100	4,735	1,365	1,465	150	250
16	Lat Pa Tan Village-tract	5	3,550	2,538	1,012	966	50	4
17	War Pa Taw Village-tract	1	1,450	1,291	159	159		
18	Ingyin Gone Village-tract	4	2,900	2,375	525	525	2	2
19	Kalar Gone (U Tun Hla) Village-tract	6	9,350	5,077	4,273	4,239	34	
20	Myo Chaung Village-tract	4	3,100	2,444	656	656		
21	Kan Kalay Village-tract	2	1,900	1,563	337	337		
22	Myaung Tagar Village-tract	8	10,900	8,344	2,556	1,453	1203	100
23	Nyaung Kone Village-tract	4	3,950	2,916	1,034	934	150	50
24	Myit Kyoe Village-tract	2	750	620	130	130		
25	Shwe Mya Yar Gone Village-tract	5	6,650	4,962	1,688	1,938	3	253
26	Tat Kyi Gone Village-tract	8	11,100	7,676	3,424	3,216	217	9
27	War Net Chaung Bu Tar Village-tract	6	7,350	5,682	1,668	987	681	
28	War Net Chaung Village-tract	4	5,100	3,787	1,313	1,213	100	
29	Pauk Kone Village-tract	2	700	549	151	151		
30	Thanday Pin Village-tract	16	22,550	14,157	8,393	7,095	1,348	50
31	Bwet Gyi Village-tract	8	10,400	6,713	3,687	3,629	100	42
32	Boe Dawna Gone Village-tract	4	4,200	3,319	881	871	10	
33	Nyaung Hna Pin Village-tract	3	4,800	3,465	1,335	1,345		10
34	Yoe Gyi Village-tract	1	800	712	88	88		
35	Moe Gyo Pyit Village-tract	1	750	642	108	108		
36	Yay Paw Thae Village-tract	1	1,400	1,170	230	230		
37	Yin Tike Pin Village-tract	5	4,900	3,633	1,267	1,273		6
38	Thayar Gone Village-tract	1	1,400	970	430	433		3
39	Thae Gone Village-tract	2	1,850	1,492	358	458		100
40	Leik Poke Taw Village-tract	2	2,650	1,632	1,018	1,068	200	250
41	Ahta Yu Village-tract	1	850	709	141	141		
42	Inn Hlat Village-tract	3	4,500	3,733	767	717	50	
43	Set Thwar Taw Village-tract	11	18,250	12,135	6,115	4,995	1,120	
	Ward total	175	203,700	147,220	56,480	52,332	5,649	1,501
	Township remaining ballots		8,203	2,280	5,923	9,177		3,254
	Total township		211,903	149,500	62,403	61,509	5,649	4,755

Union Election Commission

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19 MARCH 2021
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Preparedness, quick response key to solving water shortage in summer

THE drinking water crisis, which hit only the dry zone of our country in the past, has also spread to other areas in hills and plain nationwide due to the climate change.

Now, over 77 per cent of our country's population has got access to safe drinking water. But, due to climate change-induced weather events such as less rainfall and rising temperature year by year has threatened the people, especially in the rural areas, with drought this summer.

> Scarcity of clean water in villages across the country has become common in the summer season, with lakes that once supplied drinking water running dry.

Scarcity of clean water in villages across the country has become common in the summer season, with lakes that once supplied drinking water running dry.

The situation has alerted us to make short-term and long-term plans for supplying water to possible areas which can face the crisis and for transforming the river water pumping system from diesel-power to solar-power system.

Rural Areas Development Department carried out a survey last year about the water crisis in rural areas with the use of the Water Supply –Management Information System RWS-MIS and prepared for supplying water to 394 villages. The preparedness could benefit 347 villages on the ground.

Again, the department has predicted that about 300 villages are likely to face a water crisis this summer and has carried out preparedness to tackle the issue this summer with the use of information technology to ensure a quick supply of water to the villagers.

Over 1,980 rural area water supply projects in this financial year would benefit about 1.4 million people from 1,932 villages.

In the dry zone, water is becoming more scarce every year with frequent droughts. The dry zone comprises 58 townships in Mandalay, Magwe, and Sagaing and is home to 10 million people, who mostly rely on rain-fed agriculture and oil crops.

We should keep in mind that Myanmar is the world's second most vulnerable country to climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index prepared by research group Germanwatch. Studies have shown that the onset of monsoon is becoming more variable, increasing the risk of drought.

The worst has not yet come. We are confident that with all hands not only from the Rural Areas Development Department but also from related departments and non-governmental organizations being on deck, we can tackle this issue.

■■■

COVID May Become 'Seasonal': UN

COVID-19 appears likely to develop into a seasonal disease, the United Nations (UN) said Thursday, cautioning though against relaxing pandemic-related measures simply based on meteorological factors.

More than a year after the novel coronavirus first surfaced in China, a number of mysteries still surround the spread of the disease that has killed nearly 2.7 million people worldwide.

In its first report, an expert team tasked with trying to shed light on one of those mysteries by examining potential meteorological and air quality influences on the spread of COVID-19, found some indications the disease would develop into a seasonal menace.

The 16-member team set up by the UN' World Meteorological Organization pointed out that respiratory viral infections are often seasonal, "in particular the autumn-winter peak for influenza and cold-causing coronaviruses in temperate climates." "This has fuelled expectations that, if it persists for many years, COVID-19 will prove to be a strongly seasonal disease," it said in a statement.

Modelling studies anticipate that transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 disease, "may become seasonal over time".

Trigger?

But COVID-19 transmission dynamics so far appear to have been influenced mainly by government interventions like mask mandates and travel restrictions, they said, rather than the weather.

The task team therefore insisted that weather and climate conditions alone should for now not be the trigger for loosening anti-COVID restrictions.

"At this stage, evidence does not support the use of meteorological and air quality factors as a basis for governments to relax their interventions aimed at reducing transmission," said task team co-chair Ben Zaitchik of the earth and planetary sciences department at The John Hopkins University in the United States (US).

He pointed out that during the first year of the pandemic, infections in some places rose in warm seasons, "and there is no evidence that this couldn't happen again in the coming year". The experts, who focused only on outdoor meteorology and air quality conditions in the report, said laboratory studies had provided some evidence the virus survives longer in cold, dry weather and when there is low ultraviolet radiation.

A motorist passes by a mural of frontline workers against coronavirus at RK Puram in New Delhi on July 25. **PHOTO : AFP**

But it remained unclear whether meteorological influences "have a meaningful influence on transmission rates under real world conditions". They also highlighted that evidence around the impact of air quality on the virus remained "inconclusive". There was some preliminary evidence that poor air quality increases COVID-19 mortality rates, "but not that pollution directly impacts airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2".

Source : AFP

Some international businesses thrive, others ache during pandemic

THE coronavirus pandemic initially brought the global economy to a halt, but business adjusted, with the more nimble taking advantage of the move online while others struggle to find a way forward.

Here are some of the economic winners and losers of the COVID era so far:

Amazon, online champion

Lockdowns, curfews and travel restrictions all seemed to play to the strengths of Amazon, which pioneered the transition to online retail.

The company, headed by Jeff Bezos, who started out selling books and losing massive amounts of money, seemed perfectly suited to the changed times as bored and anxious consumers confined to their homes stocked up.

The results were stunning – a 40 per cent increase in sales to USD387 billion (€324bn) last year.

Food delivery

The home food delivery business also came of age as people dined-in instead of out, with restaurants and bars either restricted or closed completely.

Food delivery companies have seen their revenues soar. **PHOTO : AFP**

Anglo-Dutch group Just Eat Takeaway saw its revenues soar 54 per cent to €2.4 billion while British competitor Deliveroo jumped 64 per cent to GBP4.1 billion.

Entertainment

What else is there to do if one cannot go out except slump on the sofa to watch television and play video games while munching on your latest dine-in delight?

With the cinema out of bounds, the home-based version took off big time, with Netflix building an audience of 200 million on an offer of high-class films and series typified by The Crown, the story of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II. Disney, not to be left behind, launched its Disney+ service late 2019 and had 95 million subscribers by early 2021. Among the game makers, Sony and Microsoft launched new consoles and ramped up sales.

Families also played more classic games, with Danish toy brick maker Lego enjoying a new lease of life in helping keep children – and adults – amused and busy for long periods of time. The family-owned business chalked up a 19 per cent rise in net profit to a record €1.3 billion last year.

Airlines, tourism ache

Air transport was probably the worst-hit sector, with thousands of aircraft mothballed worldwide.

Predictions for a return to a semblance of normality have progressively been put back, with industry groups now looking to 2023 or even 2024. Legacy flag carriers such as Air France and Lufthansa chalked up huge losses – of €7.1 billion and €6.7 billion respectively – and required huge state bailouts to keep them going. The low-cost operators, such as EasyJet and Ryanair, adapted faster than their older peers but could not escape the impact of the near total collapse of air travel.

Ryanair's Michael O'Leary lambasted governments for bailing out the older carriers he believes do not deserve to be in business and he insisted the crisis was also an opportunity to finally restructure the industry. According to the International Air Travel Association (IATA), airlines lost some USD118 billion last year, and while there is great hope vaccination programmes will make a difference this year, losses are still expected at USD38 billion.

Oil majors suffer, recover

With the global economy stalled in the second quarter last year at the height of the first pandemic wave, oil prices fell off a cliff, even turning negative at one point.

But production cuts, supported by non-OPEC producers such as Russia, slowly helped steady the market and prices began to rise on hopes for a strong economic recovery this year. That was not enough, however, to stop the five majors – BP, Chevron, ExxonMobil, Shell and Total – from chalking up combined 2020 losses of USD77 billion.

Source : AFP

Objectives of 76th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

FOR the Tatmadaw to join hands with the entire nation to safeguard democracy, which is the aspiration of all the nationalities of the country, from deviating from its path, in accord with the basic principles of the Constitution, while observing Our Three Main National Causes, which is the national policy;

To protect the people from all dangers including natural disasters at any time and in any situation and to provide all-round assistance for ensuring social security of the people;

To restore eternal peace based on NCA, without deviating from Our Three Main National Causes, as the cessation of armed conflicts is the principal requirement in realizing democracy;

To build a strong and compact Standard Army, which has the combat prowess and combat power, to effectively safeguard the State peace and stability and sovereignty.

U Tin Yu presents Credentials to King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

U Tin Yu, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, presented his Credentials to His Majesty King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 17 March 2021 in Riyadh.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Thursday 18th March, 2021)

BAY INFERENCE: Weather is partly cloudy to cloudy over the South Bay and a few cloud to partly cloudy over the Andaman Sea and elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 19th March, 2021: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in TaninthayiRegion and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions and Northern Shan, Chin,Rakhine, Kayin, Mon States and generally fair in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS:Likelihood of slight increase of day temperatures in the whole country.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th March, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th March, 2021: Generally fair weather.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 19th March, 2021: Generally fair weather.

Five future programmes of State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted to carry out tasks that should be done, including inspection of voting lists in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken for the prevention of current infectious COVID-19 with added momentum.
3. Efforts will be made to recover businesses that faced loss caused by COVID-19 in various ways as quickly as possible.
4. Emphasis will be placed on restoring eternal peace in the entire nation in line with agreements from the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) as much as possible.
5. When missions will be accomplished in accord with provisions of the state of emergency, a free and fair multiparty democracy election will be held in accordance with the Constitution (2008), and further tasks will be undertaken to hand over State duty to the winning party meeting the standards of democracy.

Announcement on resumption of Road Transport Administration Department's services for licences

ROAD Transport Administration Department has been providing initial licences for vehicles since 1 December 2020 at its offices. Now, with the permission of the Central Committee on Prevention, Containment and Treatment on COVID-19, the department will resume its services for annual registration for vehicles as of 22 March 2021 (Monday).

- Vehicles/motorcycles are needed to extend their licences during the periods underneath without fail regarding the month when their vehicle licences are expired.

(A) The vehicles with the licences which expired in June 2020 and the vehicles with licences that expired in September 2020 are needed to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 May 2021.

(B) The vehicles with licences that expired in October 2020 and in November 2020 are to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 30 June 2021.

(C) The vehicles with licences expired in December 2020, and January 2021 are needed to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 July 2021.

(D) The vehicles which licences which expired in February 2021 and in March 2021 are needed to extend their licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Vehicles with licences that will expire from April 2021 to September 2021 extend their licences in the designated period.

Those vehicles which extend the licences during the designated periods will be granted free from fines. Besides, the department will provide vehicles, except public transport vehicles, with services for extending their licences without inspecting the cars.

The vehicles with registration licences that would be abolished due to failure to extend the licences for five consecutive years can extend their licences during the following periods. If they fail to do during the designated periods, the licences will be abolished in accordance with the Road Safety and Vehicle Management Law.

The vehicles with licences that expired on 30 June 2015 and 30 September 2015 can extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 May 2021 (Except vehicles with licences that expired in July 2015 and August 2015)

(B) The vehicles with licences expired on 31 October 2015 and 30 November 2015 are needed to extend licences from 22 March 2021 to 30 June 2021.

(C) The vehicles with licences expired on 31 December 2015 and 31 January 2016 are needed to extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 July 2021.

(D) The vehicles with licences that expired on 29 February 2016 and on 31 March 2016 are needed to extend the licences from 22 March 2021 to 31 August 2021.

The vehicles with licences expired on 30 April 2016, 31 May 2016, 30 June 2016, 31 July 2016, 31 August 2016 and 30, September 2016 are needed to extend the licences during the designated period.

Road Transport Administration Department

MoSWRR discusses draft version of Protection of Violence against Women Law

Union Minister Dr Thet Thet Khine chairs the meeting to discuss the Protection of Violence against Women Law (draft) yesterday. **PHOTO : MNA**

UNION Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Thet Thet Khine attended the meeting on a draft version of Protection of Violence against Women Law organized by the Social Welfare Department yesterday.

During the meeting, the Union Minister stressed the need of having proper law as the ministry is focal for the development of women, and discussed second submission of law to Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, readiness to discuss with the respective organizations to enact the law, the need of law to protect the violence against women in the work plans of National Committee on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and reviews on the presentations of relevant departments/organizations by holding meeting with the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs and Nay Pyi Taw Council, regions/states Women Committees.

Then, Deputy Minister U Aung Tun Khine briefed the aims of drafting this law according to the recommendations of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Director-General of Social Welfare also presented the law sections, and other officials coordinated the meeting.

The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement will organize a further meeting with the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs to enact the Protection of Violence against Women Law. They will seek the suggestions of civilian organizations for the draft version of the law. —MNA

Public information

Yangon Administration Council is working with relevant departments to help the businesses in the region. People are informed to contact the following phone numbers to get assistance for their small and medium-scaled businesses and investments which are facing some delays and working to do new businesses.
Phone numbers: 01 830 1975, 01830 2175

Yangon Region Administration Council

Kyaukse Agricultural Research Farm distributes chickpea seeds in Mandalay region

AGRICULTURAL Research Farm in Kyaukse township, Mandalay studies chickpea seeds and yearly distributes the beans to fulfil the requirement of the seeds in the region.

Under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, the Agricultural Research Department's research farm researched in the late monsoon season. The study focused on disease-resistant seeds, propagation, increasing crop productivity and maintaining the potential seeds.

The farm yearly produces chickpea varieties (Yezin 6,12, 3, 8,11 and 13), said U Tint Lwin, in-charge of the farm.

The Township Agriculture Department stated that there were 27,571 acres of chickpeas in the late monsoon season in Kyaukse Township.

The chickpea growers are expecting a good price in the coming harvest season amid low yield this year.

On 5 February, the prices of chickpeas ranged between US$1,365 and $1,385 per metric ton, Bayintnaung market's data showed.

At present, the domestic bean market is positively related to supply and demand law. The black bean price depends on the buyers and sellers. There is no official set price, the traders stressed.

"The prices usually fluctuate, depending on supply and demand. When the peas are loaded on the ship, the prices climb up. At present, the market is slowing down due to transportation problem and transaction difficulties," said a trader from Mandalay sharing his opinion.

The chickpeas are cultivated in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing and Ayeyawady regions and Nay Pyi Taw. There are 890,000 acres of chickpeas across the country. **PHOTO: IPRD/ KK**

Myanmar exported chickpeas to India, Pakistan, the UAE, Turkey and other foreign markets last year.

The chickpeas are cultivated in Yangon, Mandalay, Bago, Sagaing and Ayeyawady regions and Nay Pyi Taw. There are 890,000 acres of chickpeas across the country.

The peas are cultivated in October and November, and they are harvested in the January-April period. -- IPRD/ KK/ GNLM

Efforts being made to stabilize and develop gold market

The pure gold fetched about K1,362,000 per tical on 18 March in the domestic market while the global gold price hit US$1748 per ounce.

EFFORTS are being made to stabilize and develop the gold market in Myanmar, said U Myo Myint, the chairman of Yangon Region Gold Entrepreneurs Association (YRGEA).

At the moment, the gold prices are soaring. Thus, efforts are being made to export Myanmar's pure gold to the international market to revitalize the gold market, he added.

"Now, the domestic gold price is being restored. If we can export pure gold to other countries, we will earn foreign currency. This is the reason why we are trying to export gold," said U Myo Myint.

Besides, the small business companies and the manageable-scale companies are granted hundreds of gold mines. They are resuming their gold prospecting businesses in Tanai, Shingbwiyang, Putao and Waimaw townships. Then, we are making an effort for all those raw gold materials to reach the Yangon market, according to YRGEA.

At present, the pure gold fetched about K1,362,000 per tical on 18 March in the domestic market while the global gold price hit US$1748 per ounce, according to the local gold market data.

Although the gold price is soaring in the domestic market, the market is keeping calm, said the chairman of YRGEA.

He also explained that the gold trading market is cool because it is difficult to withdraw money because of the banks' closure, transfer the funds from one place to another, and go from one place to another because of the roads' barricades. There is also no trading for lack of safety of the gold shops.

Consequently, the daily business of 50 visses (a viss equals 1.6kg) of gold was earlier done in the market. Now, about five visses are being daily traded.

In January 2021, the domestic gold fetched the highest price of K1,336,000 per tical on 6 January. It reached the lowest price of K1,316,000 per tical on 28 January. It reached the lowest level of K1,340,000 (2 February) and the highest level of K1,410,000 (3 February), the gold traders said.

The local gold price reached the lowest level of K1,310,500 (2 September) and the highest level of K1,314,000 (1 September). In October, the rate ranged between K1,307,800 (30 October) and K1,316,500 (21 October). The rate fluctuated between the highest of K1,312,000 (16 November) and the lowest of K1,278,000 (28 November). In December, the pure yellow metal priced moved in the range of K1,275,000 (1 December) and K1,333,000 (28 December).

With the global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs in 2019, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 5 August), climbing to K1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a fresh peak of K1,300,000 on 5 September, according to the gold traders. —NN/GNLM

Total border trade value down by $86 mln this FY

MYANMAR'S trade with foreign countries through land borders reached over US$4.84 billion as of 5 March in the current financial year (FY) 2020-2021, which started on 1 October, according to the figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

From 1 October to 5 March of 2020-2021FY, the total border trade value amounted to $4.836 billion, a decrease of $86 million compared with that of the same period last FY when it amounted to $4.92 billion. The country's export via land borders amounted to $3.12 billion while its import shared $1.72 billion during the period.

Muse topped the list of border checkpoints with the highest trade value of $2.28 billion, followed by Myawady with $549 million.

The country conducts border trade with neighbouring China through Muse, Lweje, Kampaiti, Chinshwehaw and Kengtung with Thailand via Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Myeik, Hteekhee, Mawtaung and Maese crossings, with Bangladesh via Sittway and Maungtaw and with India through Tamu and Reed border posts, respectively.

From 1 October 2020 to 5 March of this FY, the country's foreign trade totalled over $4.84 billion, while its sea trade valued $8.71 billion, according to the ministry.

Myanmar mainly exports agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufactured goods and others while capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported to the country. —ACM/GNLM

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Authorities inspect construction of housing quarters in Mong Hpyak

The housing quarter is a two-storeyed RC building, and it is 120 feet in length and 130 feet in width.

MONG Hpyak township administration committee chairman and township construction committee members inspected the construction site of the housing quarters construction in Basic Education High School (BEHS) Mong Hpyak compound in Shan State (East) at 8 am on 17 March.

Taw Win Mong Hpyak Nagar Company constructed the housing quarters with spending of K216.000 million allocated in the 2020-2021 financial year. The housing project was inspected by U Nyi Nyi Aung, chairman of the township administration department, U Zaw Ko Ko Aung, head (Civil) and U Myint Zaw Aung and the committee members of the township construction committee, U Aung Kyaw Nyunt, the township education head and the officials.

Taw Win Mong Hpyak Nagar Company managing director U Tun Shwe and his engineer in charge, U Min Zaw Oo, explained the current construction process and further follow-up on the working condition.

The housing quarter is a two-storeyed RC building, and it is 120 feet in length and 130 feet in width. There will be 12 rooms, and each floor containing six rooms that are 30 feet in length and 60 feet in width. Upon completing the project, 12 education staffers from BEHS (Mong Hpyak) can stay in the housing quarters. — Township (IPRD)/GNLM

China buying Myanmar cattle on black market

CHINESE traders have come to purchase the cattle on the black market in central Myanmar, said U Soe Naing, chair of Mandalay Region Cattle Exporters Association.

Although about 10,000 heads of cattle have been stranded in Muse to be shipped to China through a legitimate route, Chinese traders are buying cattle on black markets instead.

"The cattle have not been traded on a legitimate channel for the last five months. Consequently, the cattle are still stuck in the border area. However, the illegitimate trade continues," U Soe Naing stressed.

Around 800,000-1 million heads of cattle are yearly traded on black markets, he continued.

At present, about 10,000 heads of cattle, owned by 150 companies, are stranded at Muse border. The labour wages and feedstuff cost burden them. It costs K400,000-600,000 to take care of 100 heads of cattle every day.

Some traders brought the cattle from Muse back to their home owing to the burden of high feedstuff cost and labour wages. Some intentionally stated that they would return to the original designated place but conduct illegal trade in border areas.

For legitimate trade, China permits live cattle import only after ensuring the cattle is free from 20 diseases, including Foot and Mouth Disease, along with vaccination certificates, health certificates, and farming registration certificates. Therefore, the officials concerned from the two countries are negotiating this.

Additionally, Myanmar's live cattle export relies heavily on the China market due to a good price. However, Myanmar has other external markets such as Laos, Thailand, Malaysia and Bangladesh.

The Ministry of Commerce grants a permit to each company for 100 cattle export, and the permit is valid for three months. The companies can be taken legal actions if they do not sell the cattle within three months.

Live cattle export was allowed in late 2017 to eradicate illegal exports, creating more opportunities for breeders and promoting their interests.

Myanmar shipped US$360 million worth of animal products, including cattle, to the external markets in the financial year 2018-2019. The value of animal product exports dropped by $100 million in the 2019-2020FY against a year ago, following the negative impacts of the COVID-19. -- NN/GNLM

Watermelon growers flood markets with excess supply, traders warned of market failure

ABOUT 1,300 trucks of watermelon are now stranded in the Muse 105th-mile zone, and 700 trucks pass the cross-border route between Myanmar and China. Consequently, watermelon supply exceeds the demand, leading to possible market failure, Khwar Nyo Fruit Depot warns.

About 250 trucks of watermelon daily enter the Kyinsankyawt checkpoint. In comparison, about 100 trucks loaded muskmelon are flowing into Pan Hseng and Wan Ding every day. There is no market equilibrium. Furthermore, a transport delay affects the quality of the fruits. As a result of this, the traders are encouraged to keep market balance and maintain the quality, Khwar Nyo Fruit Depot stated.

China shut down the post on 25 and 28 February without a specific reason, resulting in 1,300 watermelon trucks stranded in the 105th-mile zone.

A truckload of watermelon (855 variety) fetches 45,000-65,000 Yuan at present.

Myanmar's watermelon market earlier relied only on China. Myanmar shipped 45 tonnes of seedless watermelon to the Dubai market in December 2020 and January 2021.

After the country achieves success in the Dubai market, Myanmar plans to expand its market to Hong Kong SAR, UAE, and Qatar.

On 5 January 2021, 105th mile Fruit Wholesale Centre released a statement that the number of watermelon and muskmelon trucks for exports is to be set to govern the market.

During the previous financial year, the growers and the traders suffered the loss due to the price instability and transportation difficulties triggered by the COVID-19.

Watermelon and muskmelon will be harvested up to May-end across the country, except Kayah and Chin states.

Myanmar yearly exports over 800,000 tonnes of watermelon and about 150,000 tonnes of muskmelons to China, the association stated. -- KK/GNLM

Watermelon and muskmelon will be harvested up to May-end across the country, except Kayah and Chin states.

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Terrorists attack military commands in Bago, Mawlamyine

Terrorist group attack the military command in Mawlamyine, with 107MM rocket-propelled grenades.

THE terrorist group (leader and members still investigating) made some attacks on Warkadote Dam and its vicinity areas on Yangon-Mandalay highway road in Baw Net Gyi Village in Baw Net Gyi Village-tract of Phaya Gyi of Bago Region to threaten the community peace yesterday.

The four 107MM rocket-propelled grenades exploded near the regional military command, and it reported no casualty and damages.

The Tatmadaw members conducted operations by following the terrorists who attempted to destroy the community peace and tranquillity and threaten the public. During the operations, Tatmadaw members found another two 107MM rocket-propelled grenades at the incident place.

Similarly, another two 107MM rocket-propelled grenades were also found on Shwe Nat Taung of Mawlamyine yesterday morning. The security forces removed them in time. The security forces are beefing up the security measures for the rule of law and community peace. -- MNA

Military battalion under attack with 107MM rocked-propelled grenades in Baw Net Gyi.

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Putin replies to Biden 'killer' comment: 'Takes one to know one'

Vladimir Putin suggested Joe Biden's comments revealed a 'deep psychological meaning'. **PHOTO: AFP**

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin on Thursday mocked US President Joe Biden over his "killer" comment but said that Moscow would not sever ties with Washington over the spat.

Speaking at an event marking seven years since Russia's takeover of Crimea, Putin said Moscow would continue working with Washington but aimed a barb at the US leader.

"It takes one to know one," Putin said in televised remarks, using a saying from his childhood.

"That's not just a children's saying and a joke. There's a deep psychological meaning in this.

"We always see in another person our own qualities and think that he is the same as us."

Putin added that he wished Biden, 78, good health. "I'm saying this without irony, not as a joke." In an interview with ABC News on Wednesday, when asked if he thought Putin, who has been accused of ordering the poisoning of opposition figure Alexei Navalny, is "a killer", Biden said: "I do."

The US president's remarks sparked the biggest crisis in bilateral relations in years, and later Wednesday Russia ordered its Washington ambassador back to Moscow for urgent consultations in an unprecedented move in recent diplomatic history.

Putin said the United States was "the only country in the world that used nuclear weapons".—AFP ■

Russia hosts Afghan talks as US deadline for exit looms

RUSSIA on Thursday was hosting faltering Afghan peace talks, hoping to cement its role as a powerbroker ahead of a looming deadline for US troops to withdraw from Afghanistan.

The conference in Moscow is part of intensifying negotiations between the Afghan government, the Taliban and the United States in Qatar to negotiate Washington's exit and end decades of war.

The United States is supposed to complete a withdrawal of all its troops from Afghanistan by May 1 as part of a deal with the Taliban -- a deadline US President Joe Biden said Wednesday would be "tough" to meet.

Washington also wants to jump-start the peace process and get the Taliban and Afghan government to agree to some form of power-sharing.

The Kremlin, which pulled Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989 after a bruising occupation, last week threw its weight behind Washington's initiative for an interim government that included the Taliban.

"We hope that today's conversation will help create conditions for achieving progressive inter-Afghan negotiations," Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at the onset of the conference. But the talks initiated in Doha last September have made little progress and their outcome is uncertain. —AFP ■

Former Afghan president Hamid Karzai (L) and Taliban co-founder Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar (2R) at the conference. **PHOTO: AFP**

Tanzania's Hassan to make history as first female president

SAMIA Suluhu Hassan is a soft-spoken, Muslim woman thrust from the obscure role of vice-president to become Tanzania's first female leader after John Magufuli's sudden death.

Under the constitution Hassan, the country's 61-year-old vice-president, will serve the remainder of Magufuli's second five-year term, which does not expire until 2025.

A former office clerk and development worker, Hassan began her political career in 2000 in her native Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago, before being elected to the national assembly on mainland Tanzania and assigned a senior ministry.

Vice-President Samia Suluhu Hassan and President John Magufuli, pictured in July 2019 as they spoke to Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta on the phone. **PHOTO: AFP**

A ruling party stalwart, she rose through the ranks until being picked by Magufuli as his running mate in his first presidential election campaign in 2015.

The Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) comfortably won and Hassan made history when sworn-in as the country's first-ever female vice-president.

The pair were re-elected last October in a disputed poll the opposition and independent observers said was marred by irregularities.

She would sometimes represent Magufuli on trips abroad but many outside Tanzania had not heard of Hassan until she appeared on national television wearing a black headscarf to announce that Magufuli had died at 61 following a short illness.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Armenia PM announces snap polls to defuse crisis

ARMENIA'S embattled Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan announced snap polls Thursday in a bid to defuse a political crisis that has shaken the country since last year's military defeat to Azerbaijan.

Pashinyan has faced calls to resign since November when he signed a peace deal brokered by Russia that ended weeks of fighting for control of the mountainous Nagorno-Karabakh region in Azerbaijan.

Armenia's humiliating defeat at the hands of Azerbaijan's technologically superior army spurred mass protests in the impoverished ex-Soviet republic on the borders of Turkey and Iran.

Last month Pashinyan fired the country's most senior military official, accusing the army chief of staging a coup after he called on the prime minister to resign. —AFP ■

North Korea says will ignore US while 'hostile policy' in place

NORTH Korea accused the new US administration of adopting "lunatic theory" Thursday, saying it would ignore attempts at dialogue by Washington unless it changed course, as President Joe Biden's top envoys held talks in Seoul.

The comments from the North's first vice foreign minister Choe Son Hui came with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Pentagon chief Lloyd Austin in the South on the second leg of an Asian tour to bolster a united front against the nuclear-armed North and an increasingly assertive China.

There could be no contact nor dialogue between Washington and Pyongyang "unless the US rolls back its hostile policy towards the DPRK", Choe said in a statement carried by the official Korean Central News Agency, referring to the North by its official name.

"Therefore, we will disregard such an attempt of the US in the future, too."—AFP ■

S.Africa's Ramaphosa leads tributes to 'fallen' Zulu king

SOUTH African politicians, traditional leaders and celebrities gathered Thursday to bid farewell to Zulu king Goodwill Zwelithini, with tributes led by President Cyril Ramaphosa, who declared "a huge tree has fallen."

The leader of South Africa's largest ethnic group, who died of illness last week, was laid to rest overnight.

The burial, referred to as a "planting" in Zulu culture, was conducted by a select group of men in a private ceremony at his palace.

VIPs in face masks gathered in the small southeastern town of Nongoma, in KwaZulu-Natal province, for a memorial service in a carpeted marquee set up on the front lawn of the king's royal residence.

Guests sporting a variety of black dress and traditional attire included ex-president Jacob Zuma, the newly-elected Confederation of African Football president Patrice Motsepe, and Princess Charlene of Monaco.

King Goodwill was well known for his leopard-skin poncho -- a traditional badge of rank in Zulu culture. **PHOTO: AFP**

South Africa's embattled power provider Eskom suspended a week of rolling blackouts for a few hours to allow people to follow the ceremony on television.

"We are bidding farewell to our leader," Ramaphosa said, remembering Zwelithini as a "staunch defender of his people" who "valued diversity" and respected other cultures.

"It is a difficult day because a huge tree has fallen. —AFP ■

Passenger train 'rolls backwards for 35 km'

The "mechanical failure" hit service from New Delhi to Tanakpur, Uttarakhand state, after the driver slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting an animal on the tracks. **PHOTO: AFP**

AN Indian passenger train rolled backwards for 35 kilometres (20 miles), reports said Thursday, in an alarming but injury-free incident caught in a video that went viral on social media.

The "mechanical failure" hit service from New Delhi to Tanakpur, Uttarakhand state, after the driver slammed on the brakes to avoid hitting an animal on the tracks, the NDTV channel reported.

The rail company later said the animal in question was a cow.

Reports said the out-of-control train reversed almost 35 kilometres, but the railways ministry did not immediately confirm the distance.

Fatal accidents are common on India's vast but often dilapidated railway network, although in Wednesday's incident there were no injuries or deaths.

A tight-lipped statement from North Eastern Railway said only that an "incident" on Wednesday occurred "due to cattle run over". It did not elaborate on how the train was brought under control. "Train stopped just short of Khatima yard safely. There was no derailment and all passengers were transported to Tanakpur safely," it said, adding that the driver and the guard had been suspended. —AFP ■

Next-level lockdown: Six weeks underground in French cave

A year after France entered uncharted territory with its first coronavirus lockdown, a small group of volunteers has embarked on a more extreme confinement: nearly six weeks underground, with no notion of time, to study the effects of acute isolation.

Since Sunday night, 15 men and women are living in the vast Lombrives cave in the Pyrenees mountains south of Toulouse for an experiment dubbed "Deep Time," led by the French-Swiss explorer Christian Clot.

For 40 days their home is a cavernous complex below the Earth's surface, deprived of phones, watches or natural light. But they do have their own tents for a minimum of privacy.

"Three separate living spaces have been set up: one for sleeping, one for living, and one for carrying out topography studies, in particular for fauna and flora," Clot told journalists a few hours before entering the cave.

The main subject of study, however, will be the seven men and seven women, aged 27 to 50, as well as Clot, who must adapt to a constant temperature of 12 degrees Celsius (54 Fahrenheit) and 95 per cent humidity. —AFP ■

The entrance to the Lombrives cavern outside Tarascon-sur-Ariege in southern France, site of the 40-day "Deep Time" isolation experiment. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Report finds hundreds of child sex abuse cases in German diocese

An independent study commissioned by the Roman Catholic Church released Thursday has uncovered hundreds of cases of sexual violence allegedly committed by clergy and laymen in Germany's top diocese.

The long-awaited 800-page report on the Cologne diocese found 202 alleged perpetrators of sexual assault and 314 victims between 1975 and 2018, Bjoern Gercke, a lawyer mandated by the Church, told reporters. —AFP ■

Spain poised to legalise euthanasia, assisted suicide

Spain's parliament will give final approval to a law legalising euthanasia Thursday, becoming one of the few nations to allow terminally-ill or gravely-injured patients to end their own suffering.

The legislation, which will take effect in June, follows growing public pressure generated by several high-profile cases, including that of Ramon Sampedro whose plight was immortalised in the Oscar-winning 2004 film "The Sea Inside".

Speaking to AFP, Ramona Maneiro, a friend of Sampedro's who helped him die, hailed the move as a victory "for those who can benefit from it" and "for Ramon".

At the time, she was arrested but released due to lack of evidence, only admitting her role years later when the statute of limitations expired. —AFP ■

ONE Championship: Eersel to fight against Haida tonight

Photo: ONE Championship

REGIAN Eersel of Suriname will fight against Mustapha Haida of Italy in the main card or Men's Lightweight Kickboxing World Championship under the ONE Championship title: Fists of Fury III, which will be held tonight at Singapore Indoor Stadium, Singapore.

The ONE event will feature bouts of world-class fighters and fights will start at 8:30 pm of Singapore standard time, according to the statement with the ONE Championship.

There will be a total of six fights: four men's bouts and two women's bouts.

In the Women's Atomweight Muay Thai bout, Alma Junku of Australia will battle with Janet Todd of the United States.

In the Men's Strawweight Fight, Alex Silva of Brazil will take on Hiroba Minowa of Japan.

In the Women's Strawweight Fight, Maira Mazar of Brazil will fight with Jenelyn Olsim of the Philippines.

In the Men's Flyweight bout, Roshan Mainam of India will meet Aziz Calim of Indonesia.

Next, in the other Men's Flyweight fight, Rodkaikaew Fairtex of Thailand will fight against Hu Yong of China.

The ONE Championship Fights will be broadcast live free on the ONE Super Application and ONE Championship YouTube Channel, according to the ONE Championship. —GNLM ■

Werner returns for Chelsea's Atletico showdown

LONDON— Timo Werner was back in Chelsea's starting line-up for Wednesday's Champions League last 16 second leg against Atletico Madrid. Werner has endured a dismal first season with Chelsea following his move from Bayer Leverkusen last year. The Germany forward has netted just 10 times for the Premier League club, with just two goals in his last 26 appearances in all competitions.

Werner was a substitute for Saturday's goalless draw against Leeds.

Despite his woeful run,Chelsea boss Thomas Tuchel put Werner back in the team for Atletico's visit to Stamford Bridge.

With Mason Mount and Jorginho suspended, Werner was one of five changes from the Leeds game. Kurt Zouma, Marcos Alonso, Reece James and Mateo Kovacic also came in.

Zouma replaced Danish centre-back Andreas Christensen, who was absent from the squad due to a non-Covid 19 illness.

Atletico manager Diego Simeone made two changes to the side that drew with Getafe in La Liga on Saturday.

Mario Hermoso and Angel Correa dropped to the bench as Renan Lodi and Joao Felix started. — AFP ■

Tokyo Olympics ceremonies chief quits over pig insult to female comedian

TOKYO -- The creative director for the opening and closing ceremonies of the Tokyo Olympics announced his resignation on Thursday (Mar 18) for proposing a plus-size female comedian appear as a pig.

Hiroshi Sasaki resigned after a report on Wednesday revealed his suggestion about Naomi Watanabe, a hugely popular celebrity, for the opening ceremony.

It is the latest headache for organizers of the Games, who are struggling to gain public support and were left reeling by former chief Yoshiri Mori's resignation after an uproar over sexist comments last month.

In a statement released early on Thursday, Sasaki apologized to Watanabe and said he understood his proposal had been inappropriate.

Tokyo Olympics 2021 chief Hiroshi Sasaki (left) and Naomi Watanabe. **PHOTO: AFP**

"My idea would be a huge insult to Ms Naomi Watanabe. This can't be taken back," he said. "I regret this from the bottom of my heart, and I deeply apologize to her and everyone who felt discomfort over this," he added.

Sasaki said he had spoken to Tokyo Olympics chief Seiko Hashimoto, who replaced Mori last month, to inform her he would be stepping down.

The scandal erupted on Wednesday evening, when a local magazine reported that Sasaki last year suggested to colleagues that Watanabe could appear at the opening ceremony as an "Olympig", wearing pig ears. — AFP ■

Flick reveals clear-the-air talks at Bayern Munich

Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick revealed he has had clear-the-air talks with the club's sports director Hasan Salihamidzic amid reports of simmering tensions between the pair. **PHOTO: AFP**

BERLIN —Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick revealed he has had clear-the-air talks with the club's sports director Hasan Salihamidzic amid reports of simmering tensions between the pair.

Holders Bayern cruised into the quarter-finals of the Champions League on Wednesday as a 2-1 home win over Lazio sealed a 6-2 aggregate win in their last 16 tie.

Bayern are in the last eight of the Champions League for a record 19th time in the competition's history.

Off the field, there is said to be a power struggle brewing between Flick and Salihamidzic.

Flick said the pair met to settle their difference on Wednesday.

"We both approached each other and sorted it out in the best interests of the club. It was a short conversation and we are very optimistic for the future," said the Bayern coach.

Flick said the talks were important for "both of us, for the team and the club".

Bayern are four points clear at the top of the Bundesliga and into the last eight in Europe on an unbeaten run of 19 Champions League matches spanning two years.

Yet midfielder Joshua Kimmich admitted tension between the club's bossses was an unwelcome distraction for the players. —AFP ■