Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs
(a) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner
(b) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA)
(c) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy

2. Economic affairs
(a) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other sectors of the economy as well
(b) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people
(c) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State

3. Social affairs
(a) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit
(b) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters
(c) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation

Myanmar will be placed on track of democracy to become a peaceful, stable, disciplined democratic country after restoring peace and stability: Senior General CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing received a delegation led by Deputy Minister for Defence Colonel-General Alexander Vasilyevich Fomin of the Russian Federation, who will attend the ceremony to mark the 76th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day, at the parlour of Zeyathiri Beikman in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning.

Also present at the meeting were Vice-Chairman of the Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army), Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council members General Maung Maung Kyaw and Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Council Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Chief of the General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General Maung Maung Aye, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief. The Russian Deputy Minister was accompanied by Chair of the Presidential Council for Civil Society of the Russian Federation Mr Pavel Gasev, Head of Moscow Buddhist Society Mr Bair B. Tsympilov, Russian military and senior civilian officers and Military Attaché of the Russian Federation to Myanmar Col Sergey S. Kurchenko.

At the meeting, the Senior General expressed his pleasure for the Russian delegation’s attendance at this year’s 76th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day that will combine with the 2020’s Diamond Jubilee Armed Forces Day, which could not have been observed due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The Senior General heartily welcomed the attendance of the Russian delegation amid the outbreak of COVID-19 and political changes in Myanmar and pledged to further cement mutual respect of both countries despite a far distance. The Russian Deputy Minister for Defence expressed his thanks for the warm welcome of Myanmar. He continued to say that Minister for Defence of the Russian Federation Army General Sergei Kuzhygatovitch Shoigu sent a message of congratulations for the 76th Anniversary of Armed Forces Day of Myanmar Tatmadaw.

HAILING 76TH ANNIVERSARY ARMED FORCES DAY
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.

Military medical corps provide healthcare in township hospitals

THE Tatmadaw medical teams comprising 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, otolaryngology, gynaecology, hypertension and heart disease to the patients in healthcare services difficulties in Thazi Township Public Hospital, Hanza hospital, Yimna-hin hospital, Tagaung Public Hospital in Thabeikkyin Township, Sintgaing hospital in Kyaukse township, Yintaw hospital in Pyawbwe township, Pintale hospital in Wantwin Township, Myintha Town-

Military hospitals continue providing healthcare to civilians

MILITARY hospitals in the townships of regions and states keep providing medical treatments to the people to solve their healthcare services difficulties. A total of 979,952 outpatients and 4,100 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date.

Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 4,542 major operations and 2,419 minor operations. The senior doctors treat serious cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 6,127 babies while bringing 6,127 pregnant women to the respective military hospitals. Of those, 2,454 cases are done in caesarean section and 3,673 cases in ordinary delivery.

Officials from the respective commands also provided the patients with foods, and medical workers were provided with cash assistance. — MNA

Officials free 322 protesters from Insein Prison

THE protesters detained at Insein Prison under Section 505(a) were released yesterday evening. They sent them back to their respective townships in YBS buses.

A total of 322 people – 249 men and 73 women – were freed yesterday.

Before their release, Yangon Region Administration Council Member Colonel Win Tint and Secretary of Council U Soe Soe Zaw made their remarks at the sports hall of Insein prison.

Moreover, 628 people – 360 men and 268 women – were also released from Insein Prison on 24 March. — News and photo by Lin Latt

Released protesters are seen listening to the remarks made by the YRAC member and secretary.
Myanmar will be placed on track of democracy to become a peaceful, stable, disciplined democratic country after restoring peace and stability: Senior General

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing gives interviews to news agencies of Russian Federation

The Senior General presents the Honorary Medal to Russian Deputy Minister for Defence.

The Senior General and Russian Deputy Minister for Defence are viewing the weapons used in riots.

State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing receives Russian Information Adviser to the President and gives interviews to the Russian Federation news agencies.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing separately received Mr. Pavel Gusev, Chair of the Presidential Council for Civil Society of the Russian Federation and Information Adviser to the President, and news agencies from the Russian Federation at Hsinbyutaw Villa, here, and replied to queries.

At the interviews, the Senior General gave full clarification on political changes in Myanmar, voting frauds in the 2020 election, efforts of the Tatmadaw for the peace process and future plans, further enhancement of Russia-Myanmar economic co-operation, future tasks for prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19 and additional information they asked. — MNA
The council temporarily takes responsibilities to ensure genuine democracy and disciplined and firm democracy

THE Tatmadaw is carrying out political, social and economic development by assuming State responsibilities in accord with Sections 417 and 418 of the Constitution (2008) as of 1 February 2021 and forming the State Administration Council in line with Section 419. The council temporarily takes responsibilities to ensure genuine democracy and disciplined and firm democracy. Tatmadaw members need to conscientiously try hard for their works in individuals and must strive for uplifting the prestige of the Tatmadaw, the State and the nationality while improving their individuals and military units.

(Excerpt from the speech to the 6/2021 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 16 March, 2021)

The 16th ceremony of receiving words of advice from venerable Ovadacariya Sayadaws from Uppatasanti pagoda board of trustees

THE 16th ceremony of receiving words of advice from venerable Ovadacariya Sayadaws from the Uppatasanti pagoda board of trustees was held yesterday evening in Nay Pyi Taw.

The ceremony was attended by venerable Sayadaws led by Chairman Sayadaw of the Sangha Maha Nayaka Committee, Ovadacariya of the Uppatasanti Pagoda Board of Trustees, Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru, Abhidhaja Agga Maha Suddhamma Jotika Bhagavatmara Sayadaw Dr Bhaddanta Kumara Bhivamsa.

Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Dr Maung Maung Naing, the Permanent Secretary and Directors-General of the Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors’ virtual meeting hosted by Brunei Darussalam yesterday afternoon from Nay Pyi Taw.

This year’s ASEAN Summits are chaired by Brunei Darussalam, with the theme “We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper”. The meeting focused on regional economic recovery, despite the regional and global economy’s instability this year, especially COVID-19 immunizations and coordination among ASEAN countries.

The meeting also discussed the importance of the cooperation between the ASEAN Financial and Central Bank for the regional economy and long-term measures for promoting recovery programmes and sustainable development; matters to be implemented under ASEAN Blueprint 2025, and status on financial cooperation among ASEAN nations.

ASEAN Financial Cooperation includes ASEAN capital account liberalization, capital market development, financial services liberalization, implementation of the ASEAN Financial Cooperation Framework Agreement, inclusion in the financial sector and the development of payment and clearing systems.

The Deputy Minister also joined the ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors’ meeting with the Ministry of Finance and Central Bank for the regional economy and long-term measures for promoting recovery programmes and sustainable development; matters to be implemented under ASEAN Blueprint 2025, and status on financial cooperation among ASEAN nations.

The Deputy Minister explained the status of implementing the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) in Myanmar and the implementation of Economic Objectives.

The decisions of the ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors’ Meeting will be submitted to the ASEAN Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors’ Meeting on 30 March for approval.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Ministers and Vice-Chairmen of the ASEAN Finance and Central Banks and officials from the ASEAN Secretariat. Cambodia will host the 2022 ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors’ Meeting in 2022. — MNA

Deputy Minister U Maung Maung Win joins ASEAN finance and central bank deputy governors’ meeting online

DEPUTY Minister for Planning, Finance and Industry U Maung Maung Win joined the ASEAN Finance and Central Bank Deputy Governors’ virtual meeting hosted by Brunei Darussalam yesterday afternoon from Nay Pyi Taw.

This year’s ASEAN Summits are chaired by Brunei Darussalam, with the theme “We Care, We Prepare, We Prosper”. The meeting focused on regional economic recovery, despite the regional and global economy’s instability this year, especially COVID-19 immunizations and coordination among ASEAN countries.

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The MoF deputy minister joins the online ASEAN finance and central bank deputy governors’ meeting yesterday.

The 16th ceremony of receiving words of advice from venerable Ovadacariya Sayadaws from Uppatasanti pagoda board of trustees.
Part of Bhumi Phassa Mudra sitting marble Buddha image conveyed for fifth time

The modular trailer is conveying part of sitting Buddha image in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday. Senior military officers and disciples led by the Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Myo U Dhammayon Sayadaw sprinkled scented water on the part-4 rock of the Buddha image.

A ceremony to convey the part of Bhumi Phassa Mudra sitting marble Buddha image for the fifth time took place at the Maha Mingala pavilion in Buddha park in Dekkhinathiri Township of Nay Pyi Taw yesterday morning. The ceremony was graced by members of the Sangha led by Chairman of Lewe Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Myo U Dhammayon Sayadaw Bhuddanta Aggacara, Quarter-master-General Lt-Gen Kyaw Swa Lin, Lt-Gen Kan Myint Than of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), Commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command Maj-Gen Zaw Myo Tin and guests.

Members of the Sangha recited Gathas to disperse Metta. Senior military officers and disciples led by the Township Sangha Nayaka Committee Chairman Myo U Dhammayon Sayadaw sprinkled scented water on the part-4 rock of the Buddha image and recited Jaya Mangala victorious verses. Then, the marble rock to be carved into the sitting Buddha image was conveyed to the venue where it will be paid homage. Part-2 served rock for the Buddha image weighing 563 tonnes and part-4 rock weighing 800 tonnes were conveyed by the modular trailer from Simikhon port on 20 March. They arrived at the Mingala venue of Nay Pyi Taw Council Area on 23 March. — MNA

Deputy CBM Governor attends Meeting of US Treasury-ASEAN Deputy Finance Ministers and Deputy Governors of Central Banks

The CBM deputy governor takes part in the US Treasury-ASEAN Deputy Finance Ministers and Deputy Governors of Central Banks yesterday.

The meeting was attended by officials of the US Treasury, ASEAN Deputy Finance Ministers and Deputy Governors of Central Banks virtually took place yesterday morning.

The meeting also focused on the priorities of ASEAN 2021.

Deputy CBM Governor Daw Than Than Swe briefed about priority sectors and further work plans.

The officials kept holding the AFCDM at noon and Brunei briefed about priority sectors in 2021 while the ASEAN Secretary-General about ASEAN regional banking and payment services, subsidiary licences and Equity Participation, the invitation to ASEAN regions, and international organizations in governmental sectors for the development of financial flows.

She also presented financial regulations and restructured for Financial Integration, inbound/outbound retail payment remittance, QR Code Myanmar Standard for Real-Time Retail Payment System (RTRPS), technical aids from the Monetary Authority of Singapore and Thai Central Bank and other work plans of the government to meet the priorities of ASEAN 2021. Then the attendees to the meeting coordinated the discussion.

The meeting also focused on a joint statement to be submitted to the 7th AFMGM (ASEAN Finance Ministers’ and Central Bank Governors’ Meeting) to be held on 30 March. — MNA

Security measures conducted to ensure community peace

TATMADAW, Police Force and Fire Brigade jointly conducted security measures to ensure the State’s stability, security of people, the rule of law and community peace starting 14 February night.

Tatmadaw, police and fire brigade members also jointly conduct security measures for the peaceful night and community peace in respective regions and states and keep serving security measures the whole night.—MNA

Security measures conducted to ensure community peace

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Tatmadaw, police and fire brigade members also jointly conduct security measures for the peaceful night and community peace in respective regions and states and keep serving security measures the whole day. — MNA

Tatmadaw, Police Force and Fire Brigade take joint security measures at night.

Security measures conducted to ensure community peace
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 Htantabin Township of Bago Region and Chauk Township of Magway Region.

2. Findings in respective township were as follows:

**Findings on voter lists in each township**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference in votes missing/extra</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Extra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Htantabin</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>109,766</td>
<td>64,559</td>
<td>45,207</td>
<td>43,162</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chauk</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>190,626</td>
<td>124,990</td>
<td>65,636</td>
<td>64,635</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>352</td>
<td>300,392</td>
<td>189,549</td>
<td>110,843</td>
<td>107,797</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Htantabin Township of Bago Region and Chauk Township of Magway 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. A total of 352 polling stations in these two townships took out 300,392 ballots and used 189,549 ballots. It left 107,797 ballots instead of 110,843 ballots. The difference was 3,521 and it found 475 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

**Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in each township**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Total Townships</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference in votes missing/extra</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Extra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>64,559</td>
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<td>43,162</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chauk</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>190,626</td>
<td>124,990</td>
<td>65,636</td>
<td>64,635</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>300,392</td>
<td>189,549</td>
<td>110,843</td>
<td>107,797</td>
<td>3,521</td>
<td>475</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. According to the inspection, a total of 94 polling stations in 29 village-tracts of 6 Wards in Htantabin Township of Bago Region took out 109,766 ballots and used 64,559. It left 64,635 ballots instead of 65,636. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

**Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election of Htantabin Township**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ward/village tract ballots</td>
<td>101,450</td>
<td>64,081</td>
<td>37,369</td>
<td>35,259</td>
<td>2,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Township ballots</td>
<td>8,316</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>7,838</td>
<td>7,903</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>109,766</td>
<td>64,559</td>
<td>45,207</td>
<td>43,162</td>
<td>2,520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. It found 2,520 ballots were missing at the polling stations in 11 wards/village-tracts of Htantabin Township and also found 410 extra ballots at 5 ward/village-tract polling stations. It also found 7,903 ballots instead of 7,838 at township election sub-commission and so there were 65 extra ballots.

7. Findings in Htantabin Township were as follows:

**Findings on voter lists in each township**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aung Mingalar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>715</td>
<td>865</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thiri Haymar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,478</td>
<td>428</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Thiri Yanan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aung Thukha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,545</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>537</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aung Chantha</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Seik Gyi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,533</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>567</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kay Kyaw</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>378</td>
<td>278</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chaung Wa</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7,350</td>
<td>4,624</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td>2,726</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cham Gyi</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>847</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>253</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ta Pyay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>1,257</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>543</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Shar Say Bo</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,950</td>
<td>1,728</td>
<td>1,222</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pyin Gyi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nat Ywar</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,850</td>
<td>2,357</td>
<td>1,493</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kyee Taw</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Inn Yar Gyi</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Olin Pin</td>
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<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,942</td>
<td>686</td>
<td>686</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Pwe Thar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>1,362</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>638</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Zo Phyu Thuong</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>1,869</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td>1,231</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dar Daik</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>838</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>212</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Inn Kyaw</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>265</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. According to the inspection, a total of 258 polling stations in 51 village-tracts of 20 Wards in Chauk Township of Magway Region took out 190,626 ballots and used 124,996. It left 64,635 ballots instead of 65,636. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

**Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in Chauk Township**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Announcement of Union Election Commission**

25 March 2021

- Findings on voter lists in each township
- Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election of Htantabin Township
- Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in each township
- Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in Chauk Township
9. A total of 998 ballots were found missing at 258 polling stations in 71 wards/village-tracts of Chauk Township. It found only 19,197 ballots instead of 19,200 at township election sub-commission, and so 3 ballots were missing.

10. Findings in Chauk Township were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Subject Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th>Missing</th>
<th>Extra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ward/Village tract ballots</td>
<td>170,500</td>
<td>124,207</td>
<td>46,293</td>
<td>45,295</td>
<td>998</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Township advance ballots</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Township remaining ballots</td>
<td>19,200</td>
<td>19,200</td>
<td>19,197</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>190,626</td>
<td>124,990</td>
<td>65,636</td>
<td>64,635</td>
<td>1,001</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Encouraging ethnic languages to preserve their living culture

India's passion for cherry blossoms is on full display as it marks the start of the new business year, with many university graduates starting their first full-time jobs and older colleagues looking forward to a new wave of infec-
tions at home and a faltering in-
fection drive.

As article 22 of the 2008 Constitution guarantees to encourage the ethnic languages, literature and culture, we need to create opportunities to continue speaking and writing their mother languages.

People in Tokyo decked a cherry blossom in full bloom at parks, shrines and rivers on Friday, despite coro-
navirus warnings against holding traditional parties under the deli-
crate flowers.

Annual festivals have been cancelled, for sure. People used to spend the sakura's silent. But in Japan, cherry blossoms have been the most of Friday's cherry blossoms. In Sakura, 'sakura' with cherry blossoms is a symbol of the country, and its cultural and ethnic values.

Due to our geographical location, our country is located be-
tween the two major ethnic areas, and their culture and language can influence our communities.

For these living in rural areas, the loss of their languages indicates the loss of identity and life. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage the speaking of mother languages.

India slows vital vaccine exports as cases soar

India has been importing vaccines from various countries and is currently in a situation of immunity. At present, the country has over 100,000 cases every day. The number of cases is increasing daily, and the government has decided to export vaccines to various countries.

As of March 18, according to foreign ministry data, the country has shipped over 30 million doses of vaccines to 76 countries, and India has also provided vaccines to other countries under the Covax global development.

India has been vaccinating up to 27 per cent of its population by the end of the year. The British government has depicted its vaccination rollout on March 18, saying it would be inoculated as it attempts to vaccinate 380 million people by August. So far, it had administered 330 million shots — fewer than 1.3 billion that was promised.

People have been waiting since the start of the pandemic for the vaccines to be shipped.

As a result, the government of India has decided to export vaccines to various countries. In recent days, India has provided vaccines to other countries, and the government has decided to export these vaccines to various countries.

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Violent thugs attack police stations

THE violent people armed with homemade bombs and petrol bottles attacked the police stations in some townships.

At about 3:15 pm on 26 March, a black car (still investigating) threw a homemade bomb into a police station located on Insein road at No. (13) Ward of Hlme Township, causing damage to a vehicle of security forces.

Similarly, two men (still investigating) committed an arson attack with petrol bottles by throwing them into the police housing in Myeik yesterday noon. The dry grass in the police buildings according to the law. The meeting also discussed prioritizing domestic tourism, the training for Enchanting Myanmar Health and Safety Protocols (HSP) and arrangement to set level under international standards, and the necessity to pay attention to environmental conservation in the Inle lake area and to use Hotel Guest List Management System. The Union Minister also paid homage to Phaung Daw Oo pagoda and Shwe U Min pagoda and donated cash assistance to the pagodas’ trustees.

He also met Shan State Administration Council Chairman Dr Kyaw Tun and Danu Self-Administered zone Administration Body Chairman U Arkar Linn. He discussed COVID-19 immunization to the people from the hotels and tourism sector, developing new travel destination and tourist attractions and resumption of the hotel and tourism sector’s operation following the COVID-19 rules and regulations. — MNA

Sarpay Beikman Literature Award and Pakokku Literary Award ceremonies to be held

THE 2019 Sarpay Beikman Literature Award and Pakokku Literary Award established by Pakokku U Ohn Pe have been announced in state-owned newspapers. The award ceremony will be held on 1 and 2 April.

The 2019 Sarpay Beikman Literature Award Ceremony will be held on April 1 (Thursday) at 10 am, and the Pakokku Literary Award Ceremony will be held on 2 April (Friday) at 10 am at the Department of Printing and Publishing at No. 228, Theinphyu Road, Yangon.

Award winners are invited to attend the ceremony. For more information, please contact the Administration section of Sarpay Beikman at 01-381449.— MNA

Newly-harvested ginger in Chin State fetches good price this year

THE ginger produced in Haka and Falam townships, Chin State, fetches a higher price than the previous years. The traders offer a competitive price during the harvest time, allowing them to earn a handsome profit.

“We sell our ginger at the depots located in Haka and Falam towns. Some went to sell them at Kalay market. The ginger farms are mostly seen along Falam and Haka roads, and there is also a small number of ginger farms in Tidim Township. This year, the ginger prices double or triple as against the previous years. The ginger growers are receiving a handsome profit,” said a grower U Patoe from Haka Township. The tow handmade bombs exploded on the roads, and no casualties.

One of the bombs exploded, and the police kept an unexploded bomb.

Therefore, the police make efforts to take action against those who intentionally attack police stations and government buildings according to the law.

— MNA

Union Minister U Maung Maung Ohn inspects hotels in Shan State

UNION Minister for Hotels and Tourism U Maung Maung Ohn, accompanied by officials, visited Shan State and inspected hotels’ operations as per the COVID-19 operations rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports on 25 and 26 March.

During his inspection tour to Shan State, the Union Minister inspected Villa Inle Resort, which received the Travel Life Gold award and Aureum Palace Hotel in Nyaungshwe Township, and Global Grace Pindaya Hotel in Pindaya Township.

The Union Minister also discussed the hotels and tourism sector’s development with Myanmar Hotelier Association in Southern Shan State and responsible persons from the hotels.

At the meeting, he called on cooperation among the associations of the hotels and tourism sector to continue to develop the Community-Based Tourism (CBT) and to resume tourism following health rules and regulations for the people who have been suffocated due to the COVID-19 since the disease can be considered adequately controlled.

He added the COVID-19 vaccination plan to the hotel staff, the need to cooperate for the tourism sector’s operation the six months extended period for the loan assistance, adding that the State Administration Council Chairman pays special attention to the Hotels and Tourism Sector.

The meeting also discussed Department of Printing and Publishing at No. 228, Theinphyu Road, Yangon.

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The commercial ginger farms are found on the roads-side of the villages in Haka and Falam townships. The ginger are distributed in Kalay city, and they are, again, sent to Yangon and Mandalay as well. Furthermore, thousands of ginger are exported to India via Reed and Tamu land border.

“The prices are priced around K1,200-1,500 per viss (a viss equals 1.6kg) in the retail market of ginger-producing towns, whereas they stood only at K1,000 per viss last year. The prices hit K2,500-3,000 per viss in Kalay.”

According to the Chin State Agriculture Department, there is a total of 227,668 acres of arable land in Chin State, and 3,924 acres of them have remained vacant and fallow. — Chindwinthar/GNLM
Police seize weapons used in riots

The police seized weapons from Saw Aye Thu, son of U Yin Shwe, U Chit Win (aka) Kyar Gyi, son of U Tun Thar Mya, Zaw Min Tun, son of U Sein Kalar, Ma San San Htwe, daughter of U Yin Shwe, Ma Htet Myat Noe Oo, daughter of U Than Shwe, Ma Nan Khine Khin Moe (aka) Paing Pi, daughter of U Chit Win near Ma Baung junction in No (9) Ward of Hpa-an Township, San Aung, son of U Kyaw Win from Ashe Gone Thuthan street in Mya Sandar Ward of Myaungmya and Lay Han, son of U Win Sint, from Roe Seik 1st street. Moreover, the police also seized weapons on 24 March from Phyo Min Hein, who lives in Hinthada while other materials like shields found in diesel locomotive station in Kanaung Su Ward, and from Ye Lin Naung (aka) Phoe Cho, staff of the civil engineering department of Myanmar Railways, son of U Tin Oo, his wife Myint Myint Htoo, daughter of U Than Cho, from Saw Aye Thu, son of U Kyaw Htoo and Ingyin Maung, daughter of U Thein Soe, and from Myat Moe, son of U Thein Aung in Phaya Gone Ward of Thaung Htao in Hinthada, from Naing Wai Yan, son of U Kan Win from Mawlamyinegyun of Labutta District, from Shine Htet Aung, son of U Khin Maung Toe from Thamain Htao Rama street in No (18) Ward of Pyapon. Similarly, the homemade arms were also seized yesterday from Daw Hla Hla Myint, daughter of U Hla Myint and her daughter Ma Hnin Hnin Oo at the house of U Than Chaung, in Hlinethaya (east) Township, at Arnhan Parahita office in Kawkhmu Township, from Zaw Lin, son of U Win Shwe, Kyar Shwe Than (aka) son of U Lar Sa, Win Tun Soe, son of U Ba Myint, Ye Htut Soe, son of U San and Han Win Tun, son of U Thaung Cho in Mogok, and other materials including shields and homemade bombs at an unoccupied house located in Shan Kalay Kyun Village of Amarapura Township.

The police make necessary measures to take action against the suspects and arrest those who are still at large.—MNA

Handmade weapons are seen after villagers (Ayeayawady region) handed over to security forces.
Jasmine sellers earn daily income in blooming season

JASMINE sellers are earning daily income by selling them, according to the flower sellers. The jasmine plants are blooming in summer after ending of spring. The flower sellers are buying, on a manageable scale, the jasmine flowers from farmland and sell them back.

Daw Aye Mi, a manageable scale flowers seller, said that the jasmine flower is highly demanded in the market in its blooming season. So, I have bought the jasmine from farmland and sell them back in the crowded areas and the residential areas. Every day, I sell above 20 jasmine trees, and I am making K15,000 profit per day.

There are many types of jasmine species. The jasmine price is ranging from K500 to K3,500 depending upon the size. Some are buying the jasmine to grow them back in the houses. “This time, people are buying jasmine. Most of them are buying Kyetione jasmine, Sapa- ygi jasmine and Oakpoak jasmine species. Twelve seasonal jasmines are Thailand species, and it blossoms the whole year. It is expensive,” said Daw Than Thant, the Pyat Pyat Myaing San flower garden owner.

The jasmine flower is blooming abundantly from February to May. It is famous for its fragrance. — Zaw Lin Oo (Aung San)/GNLM

Export rice prices down despite rising dollar exchange rate

THE rice prices in the export market slightly decreased despite a rising dollar exchange rate, said U Than Oo, the secretary of Byainnaung rice commodity depot. At present, the price of broken (low-quality) 5-mark rice, which is primarily exported to foreign countries, dropped by K2,500 per bag, he added.

“The rice, which is traded as the raw export products, is called 5-mark rice. The 5-mark rice was being traded for K3,500 depending upon the size. Some are buying the jasmine to grow them back in the houses. “This time, people are buying jasmine. Most of them are buying Kyetione jasmine, Sapa- ygi jasmine and Oakpoak jasmine species. Twelve seasonal jasmines are Thailand species, and it blossoms the whole year. It is expensive,” said Daw Than Thant, the Pyat Pyat Myaing San flower garden owner.

The jasmine flower is blooming abundantly from February to May. It is famous for its fragrance. — Zaw Lin Oo (Aung San)/GNLM

First-ever commercial scallop farming in Yanbye Tsp to penetrate domestic market

THE first-ever commercial scallop farming near Thaz- intanpaung bridge in Yanbye Township, Kyaukpyu District of Rakhine State, is booming. This seafood will soon be distributed in the domestic market, a breeder said.

“I started to breed the scallops in early 2020 with a small number of scallops. I made a place for the baby scallop to attach themselves to the stationary objects such as plastic basket, bottle and other disposed things tied to a rope and bamboo rafts floating in the water. The scallops naturally come to attach themselves to those objects in two months.

Four months later, they are collected, around five to seven scallops are cemented to a hanging rope. I have around 10,000 ropes dropped into the water. There are about 7,000 scallops that have reached the marketable size, and they will be harvested soon. A scallop is priced around K1,000. We will send them to the domestic market first,” said U Khin Aye Maung, a breeder.

He is the first entrepreneur doing commercial scallop farming in Rakhine State. Agriculture has no negative environmental impact. Amid the scarcity of aquatic resources, this business will help the local people earn for livings, said U Kyaw Sint, head of Kyaukpyu District Fisheries Department.

Those scallops will also be distributed to the big cities like Yangon and Mandalay beyond Kyaukpyu market. — Tin Htun Oo/ Phyo Wai Lin (IPRD)/GNLM

Sino-Myanmar border trade rises by $218.85 mln: MOC reports

SINO-MYANMAR border trade has registered a rise of US$218.85 million between 1 October and 12 March in the current financial year 2020-2021 amid the political changes, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

As of 12 March 2021, Myanmar’s exports to China through the land border were valued at $2.65 billion, while imports are worth $920.49 million. The value of Sino-Myanmar border trades in all five border posts touched over $2.97 billion in the current FY, which significantly soared from over $2.66 billion record in the year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce’s data indicated.

The increase in trade is attributed to the extending trading hours at Muse-Man Wein and Kyaukpyu Kyat checkpoints. Furthermore, Pan Hseng (Kyukok) and Wan Ding border posts also gave the green light to fruit trucks under the driver substitution system.

This FY, border trade values totalled $2.34 billion through Muse border, $129.9 million via Lweje, $292.8 million via Chinswechau, $200 million via Kampaik, and over $5.27 million via Kengtung. The Commerce Ministry’s data showed a rise in trade value through all those border posts.

Muse is an important border in Myanmar and handles an enormous volume of trade. But at times, it has experienced a sharp drop in business on account of China clamping down on illegal goods, resulting in a halt in the trade of agricultural products. Moreover, the COVID-19 impacts slow the trade last year.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus on the border, Chinese authorities closed border crossing. Shortly after that, about 50 drivers are allowed to pass the border under the driver substitution system. Those drivers are, however, tested every three days. As a result, China included them in the vaccination programme, covering more than 40 Myanmar truck drivers, said vice-chair of Muse rice wholesale centre.

In a bid to lower trade barriers and offer relief to Myanmar traders through the border trade channel, the Ministry of Commerce, the relevant departments and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been negotiating with China counterparts.

The two countries are making efforts to set up more border economic cooperation zones and promote border trade. Myanmar’s MOC is trying to boost exports of rice, broken rice, agro products, fruits and fisheries to China through negotiations.

Around 1,000 trucks are daily seen flowing in and out of the Muse, a central cross-border post between Myanmar and China. U Min Thein said. Myanmar is daily shipping rice, broken rice, green grams, peanuts, various pulses and beans, onion, chilli, fishery products, jasmine flower garden owner. — Zaw Lin Oo (Aung San)/GNLM

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IMF says ‘progress’ after Argentina visit

IMF officials said on Thursday they had made headway in negotiations with Argentine Economy Minister Martin Guzman on a new loan package for the country as it grapples with an economic crisis made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The discussions between Guzman and Julie Kanack, IMF deputy director for the western hemisphere, and Luis Cubeddu, mission chief for Argentina reached “a common understanding of the need for macroeconomic sustainability and for safeguarding the post-Covid recovery underway,” the Washington based-crisis lender said in a statement.

“The Argentine authorities and the IMF team made progress in defining some key principles that could underpin an economic program to help address Argentina’s near- and medium-term challenges,” it added. The two sides had a “shared recognition of the importance of policies to boost value-added exports and productivity,” to improve Buenos Aires’s international reserves and help the economy improve growth and become more resilient.

“The Argentine authorities and the team also concurred that the ongoing development of the domestic capital market would be critical for Argentina to sustainably finance much-needed investment and strengthen its overall resilience.” —AFP

Vaccines, spring weather lift hopes for US travel comeback

AFTER a year of pandemic restrictions, Americans want to get back on the move — a dynamic apparent in Miami’s spring break revelers and Washington’s deluge of rental car bookings each weekend.

Travel volumes remain depressed, but off their lows. Since March 11, between 1 and 1.5 million people per day have traveled by air, according to Transportation Security Administration data. That level, while less than half the volume in 2019, stands well above the worst of the pandemic. Many in the travel industry are optimistic about a lift from vaccines after a catastrophic 2020 amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Spring is bringing warmer weather and a brighter outlook for the travel industry,” said Amir Eylon, president of market consultancy Longwoods International. “The faster the progress is on vaccines and controlling the virus, the faster the battered travel sector will recover.” The United States is administering about 2.5 million doses of vaccine per day. A majority of the population is on track to be vaccinated by the July 4 national holiday, setting the stage for a much busier travel outlook.

A new poll shows that 87 per cent of American travelers have travel plans in the next six months, the highest level since March 2020 at the start of the pandemic, according to a Longwoods survey published this week. —AFP

Tokyo stocks rise on renewed optimism for U.S. economic recovery

Tokyo stocks advanced Friday on renewed expectations for a U.S. economic recovery following progress on vaccine rollouts and improved labor market data.

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 Egypt shuts Suez Canal amid struggle to refloat grounded megaship

THE owners of a giant container vessel blocking the Suez Canal said Thursday they faced “extreme difficulty” refloating it as Egypt temporarily closed one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes.

Salvage experts warned the shut-down could last days or even weeks, potentially forcing businesses to re-route cargo ships around the southern tip of Africa in a blow to global supply networks.

On the third day of the crisis, global shipping giant Maersk and Germany’s Hapag-Lloyd both said they were looking into going around Africa.

The Suez drastically shortens travel between Asia and Europe. The Singapore-Rotterdam route, for example, is 6,000 kilometres (3,700 miles) and up to two weeks shorter via the canal than going around Africa’s Cape of Good Hope.

Egypt’s Suez Canal Authority (SCA) said it was doing all it could to refloat its Ever Green, a 400-metre (1,300-foot) long and 200,000 tonne vessel which veered off course and ran aground in a sandstorm on Tuesday. —AFP

New US jobless claims drop below 700,000, 1st time since pandemic: govt

NEW filings for regular unemployment benefits in the United States dropped to 684,000 last week, the government said Thursday, their first reading below 700,000 since the pandemic sparked mass layoffs.

The drop of 97,000 from the prior’s week’s upwardly revised figure was more than analysts forecast and comes as Covid-19 vaccinations offer hope the economy can recover this year. But, in a sign of the virus’s ongoing toll, 241,745 new claims were received in the week ended March 20 under a special programme for freelance workers, the Labour Department said.

That was nonetheless nearly 42,000 less than the week before, and though analysts acknowledged the crisis is far from over, the economy may finally be on the path to a sustained decline in joblessness. —AFP
Russia pushes northern sea route as an alternative to the Suez Canal

Russia cheekily pushed the Northern Sea Route on Thursday as an “alternative” to Egypt’s Suez Canal after a huge container ship blocked the busy shipping lane. PHOTO: AFP

Russia cheekily pushed the Northern Sea Route on Thurs-day as an “alternative” to Egypt’s Suez Canal after a huge container ship blocked the busy

United States President Joe Biden on Thursday (local time) said it is going to be hard to meet the May 1 deadline to pull out US troops from Afghanistan as per the deal made during the Donald Trump administration. Speaking at his first press con-fERENCE since taking office, Biden said that, “It is gonna be hard to meet the May 1 deadline.

Hard to meet May 1 deadline to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan: Biden

President Vladimir Putin has long promoted the passage along the country’s Siberian coast as a rival to the Suez Ca-nal, and Russia seized on the Egyptian route’s traffic jam to play it up again. The Japanese-owned, Pan ama-flagged MV Ever Given got stuck Tuesday during a sand-storm, blocking the waterway that connects the Mediterrane-an with the Red Sea and which handles more than 10 per cent of global maritime trade.

Russia’s nuclear agency Rosatom on Thursday gave three tongue-in-cheek reasons “to con-sider Northern Sea Route as a viable alternative to the Suez Canal Route”.

The first reason, Rosatom said on its English-language Twitter account, was that the Arctic passage provides “way more space to draw peculiar pictures using your giant ships”. Rosatom included a link to a news article that reported that a tracking map showed the giant ship had made the shape of male genitals before becoming stuck.

If ships get stuck in the Northern Sea Route, Russia would send ice-breakers to help dislodge them, said the nuclear agency, which is the passage’s official infrastructure operator. —AFP ■

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Russia launches more UK telecom satellites into space

A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny cosmo-drome in Russia’s Far East on Thursday carrying 36 UK tele-communications and internet satellites, the Roscosmos space agency said.

OneWeb, a London-head-quartered company, is work-ing to complete the construc-tion of a constellation of low-earth orbit satellites providing enhanced broadband and other services to countries around the world.

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Hard to meet May 1 deadline to withdraw US troops from Afghanistan: Biden

United States President Joe Biden on Thursday (local time) said it is going to be hard to meet the May 1 deadline to pull out US troops from Afghanistan as per the deal made during the Donald Trump administration. Speaking at his first press con-fERENCE since taking office, Biden said that, “It is gonna be hard to meet the May 1 deadline.

In terms of tactical reason... it is hard to get those troops out. We have been meeting with our allies, those who also have troops in Afghanistan. If we leave we will do it in a safe and orderly way. We are in consultations with our allies and partners on how to proceed. ” It is not my intention to stay there for a long time. But the question is how and under what circumstances do we meet that agreement that was made by (former) President Trump,” BID-en said when asked about exit of US troops from Afghanistan. Lastly, Biden said, “We (US) will leave (Afghanistan), the question is when we will leave.” Since coming to power the Biden administration has made it clear that it is not willing to let the Taliban have its way as the price

Russia cheekily pushed the Northern Sea Route on Thurs-day as an “alternative” to Egypt’s Suez Canal after a huge container ship blocked the busy

US troops are seen through a firing position at the Afghan National Army (ANA) checkpoint in Nerkh district of Wardak province west of Kabul. PHOTO: AFP

Fire at Saudi oil terminal after projectile hit: energy ministry

A fire broke out at an oil ter-minal in southern Saudi Arabia after it was hit by a projectile, the energy ministry said Fri-day, the sixth anniversary of a Riyadh-led military interven-tion in Yemen.

“A projectile attack on a petroleum products distribution terminal in Zanjan... result-ed in a fire in one of the termi-nal’s tanks,” the ministry said in a statement published by the official Saudi Press Agency, adding that no casualties were reported.

It did not say who was be-hind the strike on Thursday, but it comes as Yemen’s Huthi rebels increasingly mount at-tacks on the kingdom’s energy installations.

The attack comes af-ter Saudi Arabia on Monday offered the Huthis a “com-prehensive” UN-supervised ceasefire, as part of a series of fresh proposals aimed at ending the catastrophic six-year conflict.

But the Huthis swiftly dis-missed the initiative as “noth-ing new” as they reiterated their demand that a Saudi-led air and sea blockade on Yemen be completely lifted.

Riyadh led a military coaliti-on into Yemen in March 2015 to prop up the internationally recognized government, but it has struggled to oust the highly motivated rebels.

The coalition says it en-forced a naval and air blockade to prevent the smuggling of weapons to the rebels from Iran – allegations Tehran de-nies. —ANI ■

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’t it’s sick’: Biden blasts Republican efforts to restrict voting

President Joe Biden on Thursday blasted Republican efforts to restrict voting in numerous states, saying “it’s sick.”

“I’m convinced that we’ll be able to stop this because it is the most pernicious thing. This makes Jim Crow look like Jim Eagle. I mean, this is gigantic, what they’re trying to do. And it cannot be sus-tained,” he told reporters at his first news conference at the White House.

During the hourlong ses-sion with reporters, Biden was asked if he was worried about the Democratic Party’s mid-term prospects should a push to pass federal voting rights legislation fail.

“What I’m worried about is how un-American this whole initiative is. —AFP ■

Russia launches more UK telecom satellites into space

A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny cosmo-drome in Russia’s Far East on Thursday carrying 36 UK tele-communications and internet satellites, the Roscosmos space agency said.

OneWeb, a London-head-quartered company, is work-ing to complete the construc-tion of a constellation of low-earth orbit satellites providing enhanced broadband and other services to countries around the world.

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Suez Canal blockade costing around $400 million an hour

SO far, trawlers and bulldozers have failed to dislodge the huge container ship called EverGiven that remains stuck in the Suez Canal for a third day, raising the prospect of a prolonged delay in what is arguably the world’s most important waterway.

Faced with the blockage the vessel has created, Egypt has opened an old section of the canal to divert traffic, fearing the closure could drag on. Eight tugboats continue to work on the operation to reopen the canal traffic, which the authorities say could take days.

The best chance of freeing the ship may not come until Sunday or Monday, when the tide is at its zenith, according to Nick Sloan, head of the rescue operation in charge of refloating the Costa Concordia, a cruise ship that capsized off the coast of Italy in 2012.

Canal service provider Leth Agencies said at least 150 ships were waiting for the Ever Given to be cleared, including vessels near Port Said on the Mediterranean Sea, Port Suez on the Red Sea and those already stuck in the canal system on Egypt’s Great Bitter Lake.

The accident began on Tuesday when strong winds blew through the region and kicked up sand on the banks of the 120-mile channel that links the Mediterranean Sea in the north to the Red Sea in the south.

The waterway is narrow, less than 265 metres in places, and can be difficult to navigate when visibility is poor; but the EverGiven continued its course through the canal, en route to Rotterdam from China.

As storms reached 46mph, the crew lost control of the ship and it drifted into a sand embankment, closing almost the entire canal. The Panama Maritime Authority, which is responsible to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for all investigations of accidents or incidents occurring on board Panama-registered vessels such as the EverGiven, has announced that it will open an investigation into the accident. —ANI

Rarely seen Paris Van Gogh sells for over 13 mn euros

Not considered a supreme Van Gogh masterpiece, it still went for $15.4 million.

ONE of the few paintings by Vincent Van Gogh still in private hands sold for more than 13 million euros at auction Thursday, for the first time since its creation in 1887, after a century in the same collection — fetched 13.09 million euros ($15.4 million), the auction house said.

At well above the estimate of 5-8 million euros, the sale price was a record for the artist in France, it added.

The painting was the highlight of an auction of 33 works from masters including Degas, Magritte, Modigliani, Klee, Rodin and his muse Camille Claudel sold in an auction live-streamed by Sotheby’s in Paris.

The painting was reoffered at the end of the sale in Paris, after the auction house scrapped its initial sale earlier in the afternoon — where it fetched a slightly higher sale price — due to problems with online bidding.

Other highlights included the sale of a recently restored work by Camille Pissarro, ‘La Recolte des pois’, which fetched 3.38 million euros. It had been originally commissioned by Van Gogh’s brother, Theo.

Francis Picabia’s ‘La Corrida’ meanwhile fetched 3.15 million euros.

First time on show

The 1887 Van Gogh, one of more than 280 paintings produced by the Dutch post-Impressionist master during two years spent in Paris, portrays one of the windmills that dotted Montmartre when it was just a village of the northern outskirts of the capital. —AFP

Spa worker, waiter, mechanic: New Yorkers patrol after anti-Asian attacks

WEARING bright safety vests and carrying walkie-talkies, volunteers patrol a Chinese neighbourhood in New York to protect Asian Americans against a surge of pandemic-era violence after a spike in attacks against Asian Americans since the outbreak of coronavirus.

“Want to show our presence so that any person who wants to commit a crime will think again,” says Richard Lee, team leader of Public Safety Patrol (PSP).

The men and women from various professions walk the streets of Chinatown in Flushing, Queens nightly in groups of around eight to reassure scared residents and help catch any would-be attackers.

The PSP, which started its walkabouts on Monday, is similar to other civil patrol teams that have mobilised in San Francisco and Oakland in response to the spike in attacks against Asian Americans since the outbreak of coronavirus.

Vice-president Kenny Li quickly recruited more than 240 volunteers, including waiters, office workers and lawyers through social media and word of mouth. They coordinate their activities via a WhatsApp group and Facebook. The vast majority have no self-defence training, just a desire to help others during their free time. —AFP

New York Times digital ‘NFT’ story sells for over $563,000

A New York Times columnist on Thursday sold one of his articles in digital form for $563,000, the latest example of the craze surrounding “non fungible tokens” that collectors are snapping up.

Keven Roose’s article entitled “Buy This Column on the Blockchain” was itself aimed at trying to test the market as to what sort of items would sell in the form of an “NFT.”

A non-fungible token (NFT) is a digital object, such as a drawing, piece of music, photo, or video, with a certificate of authenticity created by blockchain technology. —AFP
Myanmar women’s team still garners top FIFA rank amidst Asia

THE Myanmar women’s national football team is currently among the top ten Asian teams, with a 44th world ranking, according to the latest announcement of the FIFA ranking.

Myanmar took 45th position in the world ranking last year and now has increased one ranking to 44th, with 1527 total points. Also, two ASEAN football teams, Viet Nam and Thailand, are included in the top ten list.

Team Viet Nam is currently in sixth place among the best Asian teams, with a 32nd world ranking and 1665 total points, while Team Thailand is following Viet Nam in seventh place, collecting 1620 total points and 38th in the world ranking. Australia remained the best team in Asia, with a 7th world ranking, while Japan is the second-best Asian team, with a world ranking of 10.

North Korea’s team is the third-best among Asian teams, with an 11th world ranking, and China’s team is the fourth-best in Asia, ranking 15th in the world.

Meanwhile, South Korea is in sixth place, ranked 28th in the world, and Chinese Taipei is in eighth place in Asia, ranked 40th in the world.

Ward-Prowse, Watkins score first England goals in San Marino rout

LONDON — England made a confident start to their World Cup qualifying campaign as James Ward-Prowse and Ollie Watkins scored their first international goals in Thursday’s (March 25) 5-0 win against San Marino.

Gareth Southgate’s side raced into a three-goal lead before half-time at Wembley in their opening Group A fixture.

Southampton midfield-er Ward-Prowse started the scoring before Dominic Calvert-Lewin and stand-in captain Raheem Sterling netted against the out-classed minnows.

With first choice striker Harry Kane left on the bench, Calvert-Lewin staked his claim to serve as the England skip- per’s main back-up when he scored again in the second half.

Southgate’s 50th game as England boss won’t linger long in the memory given the pauci- ty of the opposition, but he still learnt valuable lessons.

Out of action: Stan Wawrinka. PHOTO: AFP

Wawrinka has foot surgery, misses key Roland Garros build-up events

PARIS — Former world number three Stan Wawrinka has undergone surgery on a left foot injury and pulled out of a series of key build-up tournaments ahead of the French Open.

The 35-year-old will miss clay court events in Marbella, Monte Carlo and Belgrade in April.

However, he hopes to be fully fit in time for the May 23 start of Roland Garros, where he won the second of his three Grand Slam titles in 2015.

“Ahh having some problems in my left foot for a while, I have decided to do a small procedure on it. Everything went well,” Wawrinka wrote on Twitter.

“I will be out for a few weeks, but can’t wait to start practising again soon”. Wawrinka, currently at 21 in the world, underwent two left knee surgeries in August 2017.

‘Man of the match’: Chelsea player hailed by his country’s national media for latest display

LONDON — Chelsea’s N’Golo Kante earned the compliments from French media outlets following a strong performance for France last night.

Le Blues were held 1-1 with Ukraine during their opening World Cup qualifying fixture yesterday evening.

Kante had carried over his fine form for Chelsea onto the international scene, and his efforts were picked up by journalists over in France.

Foot Mercato said the 29-year-old was “The man of the match”.

They also wrote: “With a large volume of play and desire until the final whistle, the number 13 chained the kilometers to come and recover the ball high enough on the lawn.

“Also, he lost very little since he played very simple with the ball, with one or two touches of the ball. Another big match for Kante.”

The summary of his display was almost a carbon copy of what Blues fans have been witnessing over the past few months.

That endless amount of energy has been a theme throughout Kante’s career, but a strength that’s been hampered in recent years.

Injuries have been the crux of this problem.

He missed large chunks of last season through hamstring and muscle problems, issues that have rolled over into this term.

However, thanks to Thomas Tuchel’s more cautious approach, Kante looks free of his injury demons. — AFP