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Efforts are being made for the development of socio-economic lives of citizens: Senior General



Chairman of State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meets officers, other ranks and families of Tachilek Station.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing met officers, other ranks and families of Tachilek Station yesterday afternoon.

Present together with the Senior General were Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, the Senior General's wife, SAC member Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo and wife, Commander-in-Chief (Navy) Admiral Moe Aung and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and their wives, Commander of Triangle Region Command Brig-Gen Myo Min Tun, and officers, other ranks and families of Tachilek Station.

In his speech, the Senior General said the meeting was held during the visit to confer Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Title on the Sayadaw of the Naga Hnit Kaung monastery in Tachilek. The officers, other ranks and families must have

knowledge of the country's political situation. The Tatmadaw has temporarily assumed the duties of the State to install a democratic system that is genuine, firm and well-ordered due to the national situation. The Tatmadaw government of the past studied the methods of practising democracy in world countries and carried out the democratization process stage by stage before the start of the democratic transition in the country. It steered the country on the path to democracy according to the will of the people. It democratically held the multiparty general election in 2010.

President U Thein Sein's elected government could carry out many political reforms and bring progress and changes in many sectors, including political, economic, social and international relations fields. But it also faced challenges. As it was in the initial period of the democratization process, there was a weakness in the

part of democracy knowledge. The world's countries adopted their own way of democracy

strengthen the country's democracy amidst the challenges. The election law was

NLD took office for five years, during which there were various criticisms over the government's performance that was unable to implement all-round development, including social and economic ones as much as it should have been

that meets the social system, culture, characteristics and customs. During the initial period, there were pressures of certain big counties to copy their democracy model. Hence, the then government had to

amended in 2012 to enable the opposition NLD party to take part in elections. It formed a new government after the 2015 election. NLD took office for five years, during which there were various criticisms over

the government's performance that was unable to implement all-round development, including social and economic ones as much as it should have been. Moreover, there were activities that were not in accordance with the law. Later, as there were voting irregularities in the 2020 election, the Tatmadaw had to request it to address the issues properly repeatedly. It was found that ballot papers were still being printed until 7 November, although the election had been scheduled for 8 November. It was found that as various techniques, including advance voting, were used to cause voting irregularities; and there were more than 10 million suspect votes.

Although efforts were made as much as possible to address the issue of incorrect voting lists under democratic principles, negotiations failed and attempts were made to convene the third Hluttaw to form a new government forcefully.

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Honorary certificate of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services issued to police members

THE following 21 police members injured and died in the riots, who put all their hearts and souls into the crackdown on violent riots to carry out security measures and the rule of law together with Tatmadaw between 1 February and 20 March 2021, were presented the honorary certificates of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services under Defence Council Special Order No 2/special/2021.

1. Police 3984 Police Major Aung Kyaw Oo, Mandalay Region Police Force

2. Police 4212 Police Major Kyaw Zin Myint, Mandalay Region Police Force

3. La 148080 Police Lieutenant Yan Aye, Magway Region Police Force

4. La 205259 Police Lieutenant Win Zaw Aung, Sagaing Region Police Force

5. La 214067 Police Lieutenant Kyaw Naing Oo, Bago Region Police Force

6. La 238563 Police Lieutenant Naing Lin Aung, Mon State Police Force

7. La 212533 Police Second Lieutenant Nay Myo Lwin, No (4) Security Brigade

8. La 220911 Police Second Lieutenant San Zaw Latt, No (15) Security Brigade

9. La 162255 Police Sergeant Sandar Oo, Magway Region Police Force
10. La 215657 Police Corporal Thura Zaw, No (15) Security Brigade

11. La 226047 Police Lance-Corporal Khin Zaw Latt, Mandalay Development Police Force

12. La 261268 Police Lance-Corporal Ei Ei Mon, Kayin State Police Force

13. La 289745 Police Lance-Corporal Thu Thu Pyae Phyo, San Kayin State Police Force

14. La 252899 Police Constable Myaing Win, Magway Region Police Force

15. La 254410 Police Constable Lan Pay, Sagaing Region Police Force

16. La 254415 Police Constable Maung Maung, Sagaing Region Police Force

17. La 255990 Police Constable Aung Kyaw Linn, Bago Region Police Force

18. La 261650 Police Const`able Ye Linn Aung, Bago Region Police Force

19. La 262029 Police Constable Lain Manar Magway, Region Police Force

20. La 263112 Police Constable Tin Zar Myo, Bago Region Police Force

21. La 283962 Police Constable Win Ko Khine, No (25) Security Brigade —MNA

Current situation in Myanmar explained to military attachés in Nay Pyi Taw



Myanmar officials explained the current situation, which was happening in the country, to the military attachés who attended the celebration of the 76th Armed Forces Day.

MYANMAR officials explained the current situation, which was happening in the country, to the military attachés who attended the celebration of the 76th Armed Forces Day on 27 March afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

Myanmar officials explained the situation in which the military had to take responsibility for the State due to the electoral fraud throughout the country in the 2020 General Election; although it was demanded to resolve the vote-rigging under the law and to find a negotiated solution in line with the practice of democracy it was ignored and the situation that calls for negotiation only at this stage; transitional conditions from peaceful protest

to the anarchic mob, then to insurrection; the status of committing acts of terrorism by destroying public offices, police stations, schools and industrial workplaces by fire and explosions of roads and bridges and the implementation of 9 objectives and five roadmaps of the State Administration Council.

The officials explained the situation extensively with PowerPoint presentation so that the international community could know what was happening currently in Myanmar and the attended Military Attachés also raised questions.

Afterwards, responsible persons showed the display of locally-made weapons being confiscated during the riots. — MNA

Myanma Railways run regular commuter trains in Yangon

MYANMA Railways operated the third day of operation of the commuter and suburban train services in Yangon yesterday.

The three-passenger RBE train departed from Insein station at 8:35 am, passed through the stations, and arrived at Yangon Central Station at 11:40 am yesterday from where it left and arrived at Insein train station at 2 pm in the afternoon.

The train arrived at its destination successfully after Tatmadaw members, train

police members, local people and responsible persons from Myanma Railways removed the barriers along the way on the railroad.

It is reported that Myanma Railways will take legal action against the terrorists for their acts and harassment at the respective police stations.

People and civil service personnel took the train as Myanma Railways run a regular commuter train on a daily basis. — MNA



It is reported that Myanma Railways will take legal action against the terrorists for their acts and harassment at the respective police stations.

8 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 28 March, total figure rises to 142,385

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to 142,385 after 8 new cases were reported on 28 March 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, 131,789 have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Voting fraud was terrible

IN holding the 2020 election, as it was the time of breaking out of Covid-19, votes were cast under the social distancing. Votes were cast by 71 per cent. Large numbers of difference were found in the inspection of the voting result, and such findings were released. Requests were made for addressing the differences in voting results many times. There were more than 50,000 vote-riggings in Myeik Township and over 30,000 in Kyunsu Township, in addition to more than 10 million across the nation. Voting fraud was terrible. Such an event was similar to the act of illegally sitting the examination to take the highest marks. As attempts were made to form the new government by holding the third Hluttaw in addition to absence of addressing the errors on voting list, the Tatmadaw assumed the State responsibilities in accord with Sections 417 and 418 of the Constitution starting from 1 February 2021 and formed the State Administration Council under Section 419. The council was constituted with military and civilian persons in balance, and civilians were appointed as chairmen of region and state administration councils. In fact, the Tatmadaw is taking responsibilities in a short period to ensure genuine democracy and disciplined and firm democracy.

(Excerpt from the speech to officers, other ranks and their families in Myeik, Kyunsu and Cocogun stations made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 21 March 2021)

Ceremony held to confer title of Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru on Presiding Nayaka of Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery in Tachilek Dr Bhaddanta Dhamma Siri

A CEREMONY to confer religious titles for 2021 took place at the Sasana Maha Beikman in the Up-patasanti Pagoda compound, Nay Pyi Taw, on 27 March. And now, officials are visiting the Sayadaws, who could not make their presence at the ceremony, to confer the titles in their respective regions.

A ceremony to confer the title of Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru on Presiding Nayaka of Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery in Tachilek, Shan State (East), State Ovadacariya Abhidhaja Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotika Agga Maha Pandita Dr Bhaddanta Dhamma Siri took place at the monastery this morning, attended by Chairman of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing.

The ceremony was attended by the title recipient Sayadaw, Presiding Nayaka of Thila Dhamma Kontha Tawra Monastery in Kengtung (Wasipeik) Sayadaw Bhaddanta Kovida and members of the Sangha. The Senior General and wife were accompanied by council members Lt-Gen Moe Myint Tun, U Sai Lone Saing, Joint Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win



Dr Bhaddanta Dhamma Siri is receiving the Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru Title from the Senior General.

Oo and wife, Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko, the Commander-in-Chief (Navy) and wife, senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief and wives, Commander of Triangle Region Command Brig-Gen Myo Min Tun, the chairman of Tachilek District Administration Council and guests.

The ceremony was opened with a three-time recitation of Namo Tassa. The Senior General and wife and the con-

gregation received the Five Precepts from the Sayadaw of Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery. Union Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture U Ko Ko supplicated on religious matters.

Next, the Senior General conferred the title of Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru and regalia on the Sayadaw of Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery. Then, prerequisites, cash and offerings were presented to the Sayadaw.

The Sayadaw of Naga Hnit

Kaung Monastery delivered the Sammodaniya Ovada Katha and sermons. The Senior General and wife and the congregation shared the merits gained. The ceremony concluded with a three-time recitation of Buddha Sasanam Ciranthithatu.

The Senior General and wife and party offered the day meal to the Sayadaw of Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery, Sayadaws and the Sangha members.

The Presiding Nayaka Sayadaw of Naga Hnit Kau-

ng Monastery was born to U Haung and Daw Nan Pin in Yankein Village, Kengtung Township, Shan State on 9th waning of Nadaw in 1290 ME. His childhood name is Sai Shan La. On the 15th waxing of Tabaung in 1299 ME, he was a novice as 'Shin Shan La' under the Sayadaw of Kyaiyin Monastery's patronage.

When he became monkhood, he was called Ashin Dhamma Siri. At Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery, he gives government Pahtamapyan and Dhammacariya lectures and Pariyatti literature to the monks and novices day and night. Moreover, he complied with Dhammapada (Gon Shan language) and three Pidakas (Gon Shan language). He is 91 years of age and has 71 vasa. He established 12 monasteries, including Ponton Monastery and Naga Hnit Kaung Monastery and endeavoured for the propagation of the Sasana. Having received the title of Agga Maha Pandita, being a long-serving revered monk, having religious knowledge, serving the interest of people and having complied religious treatises, he was conferred the title of Abhidhaja Maha Rattha Guru. —MNA

Efforts are being made for the development of socio-economic lives of citizens: Senior General

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Therefore, the Tatmadaw had to declare the state of emergency politically in accordance with the provisions of the 2008 Constitution on 1 February 2021 and formed the State Administration Council. The Tatmadaw is taking measures for the flourishing of genuine, disciplined and sound democracy.

The Tatmadaw has assumed the State responsibilities inevitably under the law due to unlawful acts and irregularities in the 2020 election and will hold free and fair elections to transfer State responsibilities after accomplishing the responsibilities under the state of emergency. As the Tat-

Tatmadaw is taking continued sound measures to enable all citizens to lead lives peacefully and safely through thick and thin by joining hands together to take pride in our country

madaw is a part of the state and defence services personnel are a part of the people, the Tatmadaw is taking continued sound measures to enable all citizens to lead lives peacefully and safely through thick and thin by joining hands together to take pride in our country and efforts are being made for the development of socio-economic lives of citizens.

It is necessary for families of the Tatmadaw to fulfil the duties of an individual while also carrying out responsibilities of the state and to exert efforts for perpetuation and propagation of race, literature and religion. In conclusion, the Senior General urged all to perform duties with firm belief until goals have been achieved.

After the meeting, the Senior General presented food-stuffs to the Tachilek Station commander and Daw Kyu Kyu Hla, the wife of the Senior General, presented funds for maternal and child welfare to the wife of the station commander. Then, the Senior General and party cordially greeted the at-

tendees.

In the evening, the Senior General and party visited the Naungton Lake, the landmark of Kengtung, and inspected the upgrading of the road around the lake and the construction of concrete roads and drains being carried out with donations from families of the Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air), well-wishers and the residents for the pleasantness of the lake.

Officials of the Kengtung Township Development Affairs Committee and town elders reported the tasks being carried out to the Senior General. After hearing the reports, the Senior General attended to the needs and viewed the lake by car. —MNA

Announcement of Union Election Commission 26 March 2021

- 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 Pale Township of Sagaing Region and Thegon Township of Bago Region.
- Findings in respective townships 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	161 polling stations in Pale township of Sagaing Region,	126,740	77,443	5,796	837	13,050
2	196 polling stations in Thegon township of Bago Region,	108,228	118,644	10,225	880	12,172

- The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of PaleTownship of Sagaing Region and Thegon Township of Bago 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.
- A total of 357 polling stations in these two townships took out 272,069ballots and used 190,629 ballots. It left 78,457ballots instead of 81,440 ballots. The difference was 8,113 and it found 5,130 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective poll stations. Findings were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Pale Township	161	144,870	101,114	43,756	41,928	2,515	687
2	Thegon Township	196	127,199	89,515	37,684	36,529	5,598	4,443
	Total	357	272,069	190,629	81,440	78,457	8,113	5,130

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Pale Township

- According to the inspection, a total of 161 polling stations in 59 village-tract of 2 Wards in Pale Township of Sagaing Region took out 144,870 ballots and used 101,114. It left 41,928 ballots instead of 43,756. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village tract ballots	135,003	100,597	34,406	32,578	2,515	687
2	Township advance ballots	517	517				
3	Township remaining ballots	9,350		9,350	9,350		
Total		144,870	101,114	43,756	41,928	2,515	687

6. It found 2,515 ballots were missing at the polling stations in 161 polling stations in 59 village-tract of 2 Wards in Pale Township and also found 687 extra ballots. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/Village-tract	Withdraw- al	Used	Exact re- maining	Remain- ing on the Ground	Difference	
						Miss- ing	Ex- tra
1	Pale (North) Ward	1,758	1,412	346	338	8	
2	Alalbon Village-tract	1,300	975	325	325		
3	Lattaunggyi Village-tract	4,090	3,241	849	909		60
4	Zatiyone Village-tract	2,790	2,052	738	698	40	
5	MonKying Village-tract	1,420	1,144	276	256	20	
6	Koukkaisu Village-tract	1,050	812	238	238		
7	Kyaungthan Village-tract	1,970	1,402	568	598		30
8	Sinshin Village-tract	2,513	1,676	837	774	63	
9	Chin Pyit Kyang Village-tract	2,700	2,039	661	711		50
10	ChaungOo Village-tract	1,920	1,317	603	583	20	
11	ZeePhyuGon Village-tract	900	714	186	186		
12	Chin Pyit Village-tract	3,100	2,380	720	670	50	
13	Kangyi Village-tract	3,000	1,990	1,010	867	143	
14	Pahtoetha Village-tract	1,950	1,447	503	503		
15	Padaukkon Village-tract	2,520	1,816	704	784		80
16	Kabaryat Village-tract	600	471	129	129		
17	Kyaythamyar Village-tract	2,018	1,392	626	408	218	
18	Minma (South) Village-tract	1,720	1,332	388	418		30
19	Paekhinma Village-tract	1,950	1,450	500	500		
20	Popa Village-tract	1,500	1,031	469	219	250	
21	Mayoetone Village-tract	3,350	2,279	1,071	1,071		
22	Ywanaung Village-tract	1,250	815	435	435		
23	Montwin Village-tract	2,900	2,076	824	766	58	
24	Kawthani Village-tract	1,700	1,187	513	513		
25	KyayNinn Village-tract	3,100	2,387	713	713		
26	Mintinepin Village-tract	4,750	3,433	1,317	919	398	
27	Tonekan Village-tract	3,100	2,328	772	772		
28	Latpukan Village-tract	2,150	1,672	478	478		
29	KantDaunt Village-tract	3,750	2,653	1,097	1,047	50	
30	OoNaunt Village-tract	3,700	2,815	885	785	100	
31	Pale (South) Village-tract	1,754	1,454	300	496		196

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Huttaw Election in Thegon Township

7. A total of 196 polling stations in Thegon Township took out 127,199 ballots and distributed 116,950 ballots as ward/village-tract ballots, 1,021ballots as township advance ballots and 9,228 as township remaining ballots (reserve). The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village tract ballots	116,950	88,488	28,462	27,155	5,598	4,291
2	Township advance ballots	1,021	1,027	(-)6	24		30
3	Township remaining ballots	9,228		9,228	9,350		122
Total		12,7199	89,515	37,684	36,529	5,598	4,443

8. According to the inspection, Thegon Township took out 116,950 ballots and used 88,488. But it remained only 27,155 ballots instead of 28,462. A total of 5,598ballots were missing at 73 polling stations and it found 4,291 illegal extra ballots at 53 polling stations.
9. Although there were only 1,021 township advance ballots and they used 1,027 ballots and so it found 24remaining ballots. Therefore, there were 30 illegal ballots. Similarly, it found 9,350 township remaining ballots instead of 9,228 and so there were 122 extra ballots.
10. Of 9,350 ballots (187books) of township remaining, 9 books were found without serial numbers while one of them was found with 4 ballot receipts without any sings or finger prints of voters.
11. Of 127,199 ballots for Pyithu Hluttaw election of Thegon Township, 89,515 ballots were used and it found 36,529 unused ballots.

Religious titles conferred venerable monks, nuns and lay devotees from Nay Pyi Taw



Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing presents the Agga Maha Pandita Title to Sayadaw Bhaddanta Wisakkhana.

THE Religious Titles Confering Ceremony for venerable Buddhist monks, nuns and lay devotees from Nay Pyi Taw Council was held yesterday afternoon in Nay Pyi Taw.

The ceremony was attended by the venerable monks led by the Chairman Sayadaw of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory Sangha Nayaka Committee, Nay Pyi Taw Council Chairman Dr Maung Maung Naing and relevant officials. At the ceremony, the Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Council presented the title of Agga Maha Pandita to the leading monk of Aung Si Tha Pariyatti School in Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw Bhaddanta Visakkha-

na and the title of Agga Maha Saddhamma Jotikadhaja to Chairman Sayadaw of Shwe Cadi Tawra Monastery Bhaddanta Istharia.

The Nay Pyi Taw Council members, Deputy Mayor of Nay Pyi Taw, the Permanent Secretaries, Directors General and officials presented the religious titles and accessories to the venerable monks, nuns.

At the ceremony, the lay devotees were also presented the honorary religious titles for their contributions to communities’ welfare. For 2020, a total of 30 monks, two nuns and two lay devotees from Nay Pyi Taw Council were conferred the religious titles. — MNA

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12. Findings in Thegon Township were as follows:

Sr	Subject	With-drawal	Used	Exact re-maining	Remain-ing on the Ground	Difference	
						Miss-ing	Ex-tra
1	Myoma Ward	1,950	1,412	538	538		
2	Kantawmingala Ward	2,100	1,668	432	432	2	2
3	Chanmyaethayar Ward	4,050	3,120	930	930	140	140
4	Thukawaiphyar Ward	2,850	2,208	642	642	50	50
5	Ward (1) Aung Yadanar	1,750	1,169	581	483	200	102
6	Ward (2) Baho	1,150	851	299	299	50	50
7	PaikChinKone Vil-lage-tract	800	578	222	222		
8	Yeyintkan Village-tract	600	459	141	141		
9	YwaMa Village-tract	1,050	860	190	240	50	100
10	Leintan Village-tract	750	549	201	151	100	50
11	Thafencho Village-tract	1,950	1,471	479	429	50	
12	ByahmaIn Village-tract	2,950	2,099	851	847	100	96
13	DarthweKyauk Vil-lage-tract	800	287	513	263	250	
14	Yonepintat Village-tract	2,500	1,879	621	521	100	
15	Zeegon Village-tract	1,100	800	300	250	50	
16	ThitNiTaw Village-tract	1,750	1,349	401	350	101	50
17	MoeTeinPin Village-tract	1,850	1,364	486	486	50	50
18	SinKyone Village-tract	550	399	151	151		
19	Linnlal Village-tract	1,650	1,309	341	341	4	4
20	Nyaungwin Village-tract	2,800	2,081	719	719	100	100
21	Launggyi Village-tract	2,850	2,240	610	614	200	204
22	KaLantKone Village-tract	2,200	1,712	488	488	230	230
23	ThabyayHla Village-tract	1,800	1,394	406	406	50	50
24	ZeeOuk Village-tract	1,850	1,322	528	528	50	50
25	YinnTikeHmaw Vil-lage-tract	4,750	3,547	1,203	1,153	170	120
26	Kyutaw Village-tract	1,100	779	321	321		
27	Kyutnar Village-tract	700	477	223	223		
28	Kwaetat Village-tract	2,200	1,639	561	561	4	4
29	NweKout Village-tract	2,100	1,548	552	502	100	50
30	Nyaungkong Village-tract	2,850	2,025	825	825	50	50
31	Htanyin Village-tract	950	728	222	222	50	50

32	Pauktaw Village-tract	2,000	1,461	539	489	100	50
33	Thiri Yadana Ward	1,750	1,401	349	349	50	50
34	Thiriwaiphar Ward	1,550	1,240	310	310		
35	Thirithuka Ward	2,650	1,989	661	611	100	50
36	Thirimingalar Ward	1,750	1,373	377	377	50	50
37	Thirikantha Ward	3,500	1,875	1,625	924	701	
38	Ward (3) Khitthit Yadana	2,000	1,476	524	494	30	
39	Oukswe Village-tract	500	387	113	113	50	50
40	Oukpo Village-tract	2,150	1,627	523	473	550	500
41	Zalae Village-tract	1,500	1,215	285	284	1	
42	Latpanlone Hla Vil-lage-tract	900	762	138	88	100	50
43	Kannasint Village-tract	2,350	1,734	616	616	100	100
44	Ywathit Village-tract	1,300	1,028	272	272	50	50
45	Kayinkon Village-tract	1,800	1,267	533	383	150	
46	TaungKyoeKon Vil-lage-tract	450	305	145	145		
47	Takontine Village-tract	2,450	2,029	421	425	250	254
48	Hnettawmyee Vil-lage-tract	1,200	968	232	232	100	100
49	Chaungkangyi Vil-lage-tract	1,100	982	118	268		150
50	Kyaetha Village-tract	3,000	2,523	477	469	120	112
51	Tapin Hmaw Village-tract	2,000	1,522	478	478		
52	Innpawnge Village-tract	1,650	1,276	374	374	50	50
53	Soutchon Gyi Village-tract	550	360	190	190		
54	Kyoepintha Village-tract	5,850	4,876	974	924	50	
55	Kywalgaung Village-tract	2,000	1,479	521	525	96	100
56	Charlyargone Vil-lage-tract	1,900	1,489	411	411	100	100
57	Yathta Village-tract	850	682	168	168		
58	GwayGone Village-tract	2,950	2,270	680	681	149	150
59	MinHla Village-tract	1,100	830	270	266	50	46
60	Bwattaw Village-tract	850	948	-98	302		400
61	KyoeKon Village-tract	2,400	1,835	565	571	200	206
62	Ywathayar Village-tract	1,150	833	317	317		
63	Kyoeyat Village-tract	1,500	1,123	377	348	100	71
Total		116,950	88,488	28,462	27,155	5,598	4,291

Jaggery price down by K500 in early toddy season

JAGGERY in NyaungU Township, Mandalay Region fetched only K1,300 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) in the early toddy season, showing a slight decrease of K500 as against last year.

The jaggery is traded regularly in Mandalay's early toddy season, said U Chit San, a toddy palm farmer from Taungba village of NyaungU Township.

There is a vast area of toddy palm farm in NyaungU Township. However, the jaggery cannot keep up with the sugar business. Moreover, the local jaggery business is less popular among young people. Earlier, all the villagers solely relied on toddy palm cultivation. At present, the number of toddy palm farmer dropped by half, said a

farmer U Soe Win.

If jaggery is priced low even in the early toddy season, the price is likely to remain low during the abundant harvest, he added.

The toddy palm tree climbing is a traditional business in Ngathayouk town in the NyaungU District. Yet, the business is not financially secure. Consequently, the local people migrate to South Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia for agriculture and hard labour. The growing number of migrant workers from Ngathayouk town are seen.

The toddy season starts in January and February in Ngathayouk town. The business is physically demanding but less secure. The toddy palm tree



Jiggery price is declining. The local people from the central part of the country struggle to survive from the production of jaggery and palm juice only.

climbers and jaggery makers closely observe the market to produce the jaggery.

Jiggery price is declining. The local people from the cen-

tral part of the country struggle to survive from the production of jaggery and palm juice only. Sometimes, palm fruits are used as snacks as well as feedstuff. It

was believed as a product with a low grade. Some trees were even cut down to use as firewood in the previous years. — Ko Htein (IPRD)/GNLM

Manufacturing exports shrink to \$3.13 bln as of 12 March



Myanmar's garment export dropped by over 25 per cent as of the first quarter of the current FY compared with a year-ago period on the back of a slump in demand by the European Union market. **PHOTO: GNLM/ FILE**

EXPORTS of finished industrial goods drastically plummeted to US\$3.137 billion between 1 October and 12 March in the current financial year 2020-2021, a severe drop of \$1.66 billion compared with the corresponding period of the previous FY, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

As per the ministry figures, the exports of finished industrial goods totalled \$4.79 billion during the same period in the

2019-2020FY.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector is primarily concentrated in garment and textiles produced on the Cutting, Making, and Packaging basis, contributing to its GDP to a certain extent.

Myanmar's garment export dropped by over 25 per cent as of the first quarter of the current FY compared with a year-ago period on the back of a slump in demand by the European Union

market, the Ministry of Commerce stated.

Myanmar's garment industry has been facing challenges such as raw material supply disruption and orders' cancellation amid the pandemic. Additionally, the current political changes dragged down the sector, a market observer shared his opinion.

At present, the CMP garment factories temporarily shut down and left thousands of workers unemployed.

Myanmar mainly exports CMP garments to markets in Japan and Europe, along with the Republic of Korea, China, and the US.

The garment sector is among the prioritized sectors driving up exports. The CMP garment industry has emerged as a promising one, with preferential trade from Western countries. Yet, the country's current political changes are likely to aggravate the garment industry, traders stressed.

Myanmar's garment factories operate under the CMP system, and those engaged in this industry are striving to transform CMP into the free-on-board (FoB) system. As the factories cannot enter into a contract for FoB, Own Design Manufacturing (ODM) and Own Business Manufacturing (OBM), the income is limited, according to the MGMA.

According to data from the Ministry of Commerce, exports of garments manufactured under the cut-make-pack (CMP) system were valued at US\$4.798 billion in the last financial year 2019-2020.

Although the sector is struggling due to the cancellation of order from the European countries and suspension of Western countries' trade during the pandemic, export values rose in the previous FY (1 October 2019-30 September 2020).

The export value of CMP garments was only \$850 million in the 2015-2016 FY, but it has

tripled over the past two FYs. In the 2016-2017FY, about \$2 billion was earned from exports of CMP garments. The figure increased to an estimated \$2.5 billion in the 2017-2018FY and \$2.2 billion in the 2018 mini-budget period (from April to September). It tremendously grew to \$4.6 billion in the 2018-2019FY, according to the Commerce Ministry.

Since an outbreak like COVID-19 might happen in the future, it is necessary to prepare for a sufficient raw materials supply. That's being so, the public and private sectors will cooperate in setting up the supply chain on our own sources, including weaving, knitting, dyeing, and sewing factories.

The MGMA has more than 500 members and garment factories in Myanmar, employing more than 400,000 workers. Investors prefer to invest in countries with inexpensive labour, such as Myanmar. — KK/ GNLM

Manageable-scale oyster mushroom growers earn additional income in Ngape

PEOPLE from the Kyaung Dwin ward in Ngape township in the Magway region are growing oyster mushroom on a manageable scale in their yard and earning additional income.

Oyster mushrooms are a popular item at restaurants, farmers' markets and supermarkets. The oyster mushroom pack is being kept in a well-ventilated place and away from direct

sunlight. Additionally, the temperature between 25 degrees Celsius and 28 degrees Celsius is suitable for growing oyster mushroom, with humidity being 80 per cent.

The mushroom packed with plastic edges on the surface is cut with a clean knife. The pack needs to be kept on wooden or bamboo plates, and each put one and a half feet apart. The mush-

room likes the cold and needs watering gently on a daily basis. But we need to take care that the water will be drained off the pack. If the water permeates into the pack, the mushroom in the pack will be rotten.

The oyster mushroom is fairly easy to grow. An oyster mushroom takes about six weeks to harvest. After opening the mushroom pack, it will start blos-

soming small mushroom after three or seven days and then harvested in three or four days.

I have been growing around 700 packs of oyster mushroom in my small garden for six years. I have five mushroom yielding visses every three days, and I am selling them for K800 per 160 grams. So, we are earning additional income for our family, said Daw Wai Hnin, a manageable

scale oyster mushroom grower.

The oyster mushroom can be eaten fried with meat and other vegetables and as a salad. It contains a high nutritional value.

The agriculture department in Ngape township is providing mushroom cultivation and production training. Those who are interested in joining the training need to contact their department. —Ma Yu (Ngape)/GNLM

Dealing with delays of port services key to smooth flow of trade

MARITIME transport accounts for over 80% of the world trade volume and is the backbone of the global economy. The current situation in the country disrupted shipping operations related to normal trade and internal trade since last month.

In fact, the coronavirus outbreak has already negatively affected our country's border and normal trade and reduced

revenue from the tax. Since the outbreak, imports of raw materials have dropped. With stocks running out, manufacturers are concerned about the availability of raw materials.

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, some production came back online and gave jobs to the local people in anticipation of exporting the products through normal trade.

Now, there are delays of port services and a solution for solving the current port services sector should be sought through open discussion between the port services users, traders, port services agencies and shipping lines.

Regarding the external trade, the Customs Department is working on returning the taxation and customs clearance to normal, and it can make container services speedy at ports. It is worth noting that the department is also making arrangements for ensuring the commerce and trade flow return to normal in the coming Thingyan new year holidays in mid-April. It would bring opportunities for traders and port service agencies to resume their operations.

Hence, traders and port service agencies can support this scheme by information and ways which can ensure smooth services to the authorities concerned. This should be the first step for them to resume their services.

It is learnt that the traders of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry are facing challenges for export and import, some delays in port services and unnecessary restrictions. They have to spend much more than they should on port services due to delays.

The authorities concerned have offered their help and is seeking advice from traders to overcome current challenges.

Hence, it is important for the authorities, traders and port service agencies to work together to deal with the current situation. Only then can we explore ways to recover from possible losses and damage to the local economy due to delays of port services and customs clearances?

Dealing with unnecessary delays of port services is key to ensuring the smooth flow of trade.

Pandemic upsurge hits Europe recovery hopes

AN upsurge in new coronavirus cases is forcing governments across Europe into new, damaging lockdowns that threaten to delay a much hoped-for return to growth, economists say.

The plan was that mass vaccination programmes would turn the tide on the pandemic, allowing locked-down consumers free rein after months penned up at home.

Instead the virus has embarked on a third wave which is proving more difficult to bring under control.

French President Emmanuel Macron warned Thursday that the European Union would have to do more and beef up its already massive 750 billion euro (\$885 billion) virus recovery fund as a result.

The EU had made a major effort after the first wave last year, Macron said, but "following the second and third waves... we will no doubt have to add to our response".

In September, as the economy picked up sharply after a rapid reverse in the first wave, expectations were high that by the middle of this year it would be solidly back on track, thanks especially to the vaccine rollout.

123 billion euro delay

Just a couple of weeks ago, European Central Bank head Christine Lagarde was even talking about a "firm rebound in activity in the second half of the year".

Now the EU's strongest economies -- Germany, France and Italy -- have reimposed restrictions and the vaccine programme in Europe is mired in a blame game over supplies.

Credit insurer Euler Hermes estimates that the EU is now seven weeks adrift of its target to have 70 percent of the population vaccinated by the end of the summer, compared with five weeks in February.

It estimates the delay will cost the bloc's 27 member states some 123 billion euros this year.



French Prime Minister Jean Castex visits and insulates systems factory in Golbey, eastern France. PHOTO: AFP

"If you compare us with the US, where the outlook is so much more positive, we are falling further behind on the recovery because of this third wave," said Charlotte de Montpellier, economist with Dutch bank ING.

"Two speed" Europe

ING now expects eurozone growth of 3.0 percent this year, down more than half a percentage point from its previous estimate. Most of the growth will also come from the third quarter, slightly later too, ING added.

Andrew Kenningham, chief

Europe economist at Capital Economics, said he does not expect the bloc to return to pre-pandemic activity levels before the second half of 2022, a year behind the US.

"We are revising down our forecast for eurozone GDP

growth due to the resurgence of virus cases, slow pace of vaccination and extension of lockdowns," Kenningham said.

"The outlook has deteriorated," said Chris Williamson, chief economist at IHS Markit.

The key Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) compiled by IHS Markit for March showed Germany, Europe's strongest economy, doing better than France and the northern countries generally doing better than their southern partners -- Spain, Italy, Greece, Portugal -- which risk seeing their key tourist industries shackled for yet another year.

Standard and Poor's however has decided to keep its eurozone growth forecast unchanged at 4.2 percent for 2021, citing the positive factor of cheap credit.

At the same time, the economy and Europe's people have adapted to the restrictions, lessening the impact, said Sylvain Broyer, chief S&P economist for Europe.

SOURCE: AFP

AstraZeneca: Who is using the jab and who is not

IN the tumultuous rollout of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, all eyes were on the United States this week, where the company had a highly public communication breakdown over the vaccine's efficacy with an expert panel overseeing a large study in the Americas.

But on the other side of the Atlantic, the vaccine faces new concerns about safety as

an explanation gains ground for the unusual strokes and clotting disorders recorded in at least 30 recipients.

Many European countries suspended use of AstraZeneca's vaccine earlier this month following initial reports of the symptoms, which have led to at least 15 deaths.

Most resumed vaccinations after the European Medicines

Agency (EMA) recommended doing so on 18 March, saying the benefits of the vaccine outweigh any risks. EMA is continuing to investigate the matter and will convene a wideranging committee of experts on 29 March.

The AstraZeneca vaccine has had a rollercoaster ride. While staunchly supported by Britain, which developed it, South Africa has rejected it out-

right while some other countries have suspended their rollouts.

Nevertheless, the vaccine is still the most widely used in the world and remains cheaper and easier to store than its competitors.

It has already been given in some 100 countries, according to an AFP database from official sources.

Here is an overview of who where it is and isn't being used: **Ditched**

South Africa suspended its vaccine rollout -- meant to begin with AstraZeneca shots in February -- after a study found the jab failed to prevent mild and moderate illness caused by a variant found there.

Instead it offered its doses to the African Union. **Suspended**

More than a dozen countries including the biggest European Union nations suspended AstraZeneca shots in mid-March because of fears over blood clots

and other possible side effects.

Most, including Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and Slovenia have restarted using it however.

They acted after the EU's drugs regulator said the vaccine was "safe and effective" and not linked to a higher risk of blood clots, but could not rule out definitively a link to a rare clotting disorder.

Other countries have continued their suspensions, including Norway which has extended it until April 15 to allow more time to investigate.

Denmark announced a three-week extension of its pause on Thursday for a closer look at side effects.

Other countries have resumed with riders: Finland, Iceland and Sweden are restarting their rollouts, although only for older people.

France has limited its use to over 55s, and Spain to under 65s.

Outside Europe countries

such as Thailand and Indonesia, which had temporarily suspended injections or delayed their immunization campaigns, resumed after the World Health Organization said on March 19 that the benefits of the vaccine outweighed the risks.

100 countries

Despite criticisms over supply difficulties and safety concerns, the vaccine developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University is today being administered in around 100 countries and territories.

Britain, which has raced ahead with its use, administering it to millions, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson, is one of its most enthusiastic supporters among rich countries.

The jab also forms the bulk of those being given for free to poorer countries under the Covax scheme led by the WHO and the Gavi vaccine alliance.

SOURCE: AFP

Request to health workers

1. It is appreciated for the strenuous efforts of the medical doctors, nurses, medical experts and other health workers at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports at the front-line in the fight against prevention, containment and treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).
2. As the vaccination programme of COVID-19 is being conducted for the public and the real-time healthcare services are required for the people, all the staff members at the respective departments under the Ministry of Health and Sports are strongly urged to return to their duties with taking the well-being of patients into consideration.

Ministry of Health and Sports
8 February 2021



Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 28 March 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 29 March 2021: Rain or thundershowers are likely to be isolated in Sagaing, Mandalay, Taninthayi Regions and Kachin, Northern Shan, Chin, Northern Rakhine, Kayah, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (60%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the Remaining regions and states.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers in Upper Sagaing, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Chin, Kayin, Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 March 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 March 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 29 March 2021: Partly cloudy.



The coronavirus vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca is already being administered in the UK. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD/JOHN CAIRNS

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2021 religious titles conferring ceremony held in Yangon



The YRAC holds the 2021 religious Titles Conferring Ceremony in Yangon on 27 March 2021.

WITH the Yangon Region Administration Council's leadership, the 2021 Religious Titles Conferring Ceremony to the venerable monks, nuns and people was held on 27 March in Maha Pathana Cave in Thiri Mingalar Kaba Aye Hill, Yangon.

The ceremony was attended by the venerable monks and nuns and honourable persons led by Chairman Sayadaw of the Yangon Region Sangha Nay-

aka Committee Tipidaka Agga Maha Pandita Agga Maha Sadhamma Jotikadhaja Bhaddanta Agga Sami.

Also present at the ceremony were Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council U Hla Soe and wife, Commander of the Yangon Region Military Headquarters General Nyunt Win Swe and wife, officials from the Yangon Region Administration Council and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

At the ceremony, the Chairman Sayadaw of the Yangon Region Sangha Nayaka Committee presided over the meeting, and the Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council presented religious matters.

A total of 178 venerable Sayadaws, eight venerable nuns and 11 people were conferred the religious titles and also rice and offertories were donated to the venerable Sayadaws and nuns yesterday. — MNA

Individual's border trade hit over K10 bln in 4 months in Myanmar

MYANMAR'S total border trade using Individual Trading Cards (ITC) exceeded K10.85 billion in the first four months of the current budget year (FY) 2020-2021 which started in October, according to the official's figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

From October to January this FY, the ministry issued 23 ITCs and export using those cards through border crossings earned over K1.66 billion while its imports exceeded K9.19 billion.

During the period, the Myawady border post recorded the highest ITC's trade with K7.7 billion.

So far, the ministry has issued a total of 1,798 ITCs, registering its trade value of over K223 billion since FY2012-2013, according to the Ministry of Commerce's figures.

Myanmar mainly exports

agricultural products, animal products, marine products, minerals, forest products, manufactured goods and other goods to foreign trade partner countries. In contrast, capital goods, intermediate goods and consumer goods are imported into the country.

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

A business person can trade K3 million a day with an ITC. The trade department granted trade value up to K15 million a day, which amounted to a five-day trade value. — Zwe/GNLM

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KNLA's Brigade 5 attacks Htee Mu Hta military base

KNLA'S Brigade-5, led by Baw Kyaw He attacked Tatmadaw base near Htee Mu Hta Village in Hpapun on the morning of 27 March. The KNU signed the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) on 15 October 2015 in the presence of international witnesses and ethnic leaders.

Its Brigade-5's troops conducted car bomb attacks on ration storages of the Tatmadaw, attack on construction routes which support the regional development, and artillery attacks on military bases. With these military actions, Brigade-5 tried to disrupt the NCA. Under the separate commands of Baw Kyaw He, the KNU's troops carried out attacks on the Tatmadaw's convoys from January 2020 to date.

Nine vehicles of the Tatmadaw were destroyed in the attacks.

Moreover, they ambushed 25 times, attacking local commands in Hpa-an, Thaton, Toungoo and Bawnetgyi areas with 107-MM rockets. They also attempted to attack a civilian target in Mawlamyine for one time.

Regarding the attacks, the Tatmadaw, with high tolerance to restore eternal peace, warned the central committee of KNU several times, including condemnation and giving notices to the KNU to respect the facts of NCA via Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee, National Solidarity and Peace-making Central Committee. However, KNLA's Brigade-5 did not follow the instructions of KNU Central Committee

members and KNLA Chief and continue to carry out actions to disrupt the NCA.

Therefore, Tatmadaw informed KNU leaders to control the Brigade-5 and KNU replied that they continue to walk on the NCA path, and the activities of Brigade-5 are not the desire of KNU central. As Baw Kyaw He, who is at the rank of deputy Chief of staff, did not obey the orders and Brigade-5 members are breaking the NCA harming the peace, the Tatmadaw can take necessary actions, said KNU in its reply to the Tatmadaw.

Although KNU members and local ethnic people want to continue to walk on the NCA path, which is a basic agreement for eternal peace, the local ci-



Damages are seen after the KNLA Brigde-5's attack.

vilians are suffering panic over the actions of the narrow-minded bigot Baw Kyaw He who wants war.

Therefore, as Brigade-5 neglected the NCA and attacked

Tatmadaw bases that are conducting security measures according to the NCA, the Tatmadaw will take the necessary actions against them starting 27 March. —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 pressure, 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.

Indonesia cathedral rocked by Palm Sunday suicide bomb

AN Indonesian cathedral was rocked by a suspected suicide bombing on Sunday with body parts littering the chaotic scene as Christians inside celebrated the start of Holy Week, police said.

The powerful blast at the church in Makassar city on Sulawesi island happened around 10:30 am local time (0330 GMT) and left at least one person dead and nine church officials and congregants injured, according to authorities.

It was not immediately clear if any of the injuries were life-threatening.

"We suspect it was a suicide bombing," South Sulawesi police chief Merdisyam, who like many Indonesians goes by one

name, told reporters.

Two bombers are suspected.

A church security guard tried to prevent a man on a motorbike from entering the compound when the blast occurred, with images from the scene showing what appeared to be a body lying inside the parking lot.

Churches have been targeted in the past by extremists in Indonesia, the world's biggest Muslim-majority nation.

In 2018, a dozen people were killed when a family of suicide bombers blew themselves up at churches during Sunday services in Indonesia's second-biggest city Surabaya.

The family -- including two



An Indonesian cathedral was rocked by a suspected suicide bombing on Sunday with body parts littering the chaotic scene as Christians inside celebrated the start of Holy Week, police said. **PHOTO: AFP**

daughters, aged nine and 12 -- and another family of five, which carried out the suicide bombing of a police headquarters, all belonged to the same Koran study

group and were linked to local extremist network Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), which has pledged allegiance to Islamic State. —AFP ■

Fox News sued anew over false election fraud claims



Vote machine maker Dominion is seeking over \$1 billion in a lawsuit lodged Friday against Fox News, alleging the network broadcast false claims that its machines were used to rig the 2020 election that Donald Trump lost. **PHOTO: AFP**

VOTE machine maker Dominion is seeking over \$1 billion in a lawsuit lodged Friday against Fox News, alleging the network broadcast false claims that its machines were used to rig the 2020 election that Donald Trump lost. This is the second defamation complaint against the conservative news channel, which was already sued in February for similar reasons by another voting machine company, Smartmatic.

Dominion alleges that Fox began endorsing Trump's false claims the election was rigged in favour of Joe Biden because the channel was losing its audience, which includes many of the ex-president's supporters.

"So Fox set out to lure viewers back -- including president Trump himself -- by intentionally and falsely blaming Dominion for president Trump's loss by rigging the election," the suit argues.

The viral claims saw Dominion pilloried online and in con-

servative media and forced the company to repeatedly defend its reputation, despite no evidence that its vote tallies were erroneous. Dozens of state and federal rulings, as well as the US Congress, have rejected such allegations. Dominion has also sued Trump's lawyer and former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani, and another lawyer for the former president, Sidney Powell, over the false claims.

In the 139-page complaint filed Friday in the eastern state of Delaware, the company accuses Fox News of spreading "outlandish, defamatory, and far-fetched fictions" about Dominion.

"Fox took a small flame and turned it into a forest fire," alleges the complaint. "As the dominant media company among those viewers dissatisfied with the election results, Fox gave these fictions a prominence they otherwise would never have achieved." —AFP ■

Opening arguments set to begin in George Floyd murder trial

OPENING arguments begin on Monday in the trial of the white police officer accused of killing George Floyd, a Black man whose death was captured on video and touched off protests against racial injustice across the United States and around the world.

Derek Chauvin, a 19-year veteran of the Minneapolis Police Department, faces murder and manslaughter charges for his role in the May 25, 2020 death of the 46-year-old Floyd.

Chauvin, 44, who was fired from the police force along with three other officers, could be sentenced to up to 40 years in prison if convicted of the most serious charge -- second-degree murder.

Opening arguments are to begin at 9:00 am Central time (1400 GMT) in a heavily guarded Minneapolis courtroom for a trial expected to last about

a month.

Fifteen jurors have been selected for the high-profile case.

Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill is expected to drop one juror on Monday and proceed with 12 and two alternates.

The panel seated after two weeks of jury selection is racially mixed: six white women, three Black men, three white men, two mixed race women and one Black woman.

Police officers are rarely convicted in the United States when charges are brought against them and the trial is being closely watched around the world.

A conviction on any of the charges -- second-degree murder, third-degree murder or manslaughter -- will require the jury to return a unanimous verdict. —AFP ■



Protestors at a 'Justice for George Floyd' march in Saint Paul, Minnesota. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Saudi Arabia unveils campaign to tackle climate change

TOP crude exporter Saudi Arabia on Saturday unveiled a sweeping campaign to tackle climate change and reduce carbon emissions, including a plan to plant billions of trees in the coming decades.

The OPEC kingpin seems an unlikely champion of clean energy, but the "Saudi Green Initiative" aims to reduce emissions by generating half of its energy from renewables by 2030, de facto ruler Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said.

Saudi Arabia also plans to plant 10 billion trees in the kingdom in the coming decades, he said in a statement released by the official SPA news agency.

Riyadh also plans to work with other Arab states on a "Middle East Green Initiative" to plant an additional 40 billion trees, in what would be the world's largest reforestation programme, he added. —AFP ■

Violence breaks out in fresh Bangladesh protests

AT least a dozen people were reported injured in clashes between police and Islamist demonstrators in Bangladesh on Sunday, the third day of protests against the visit of India's Hindu-nationalist leader.

Five people died on Friday, and another six the next day, after police shot at demonstrators in several major districts across the Muslim-majority nation of 168 million people.

The protesters -- mostly from the hardline Islamist group Hefazat-e-Islam -- were angry at the visit of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as Bangladesh marked 50 years of independence, accusing him of stoking communal violence against Muslims in his country.

At one new protest in Narayanganj just outside the capital Dhaka, Hefazat supporters chanted "action, action, direct action" as they blocked the key highway linking Dhaka with the port city of Chittagong. —AFP ■

China, Iran ink 25-year deal to boost ties



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (R) meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi (L) in Tehran, Iran on March 27, 2021. **PHOTO: KYODO**

CHINA and Iran struck a new accord Saturday for strengthening bilateral political and economic relations over the next

25 years, as the two countries are boosting cooperation to better navigate their complicated relationships with the United States.

The accord for comprehensive cooperation was signed by Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi during a meeting in Tehran.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who also held talks with Wang, told the Chinese foreign minister that Tehran and Beijing "have very good ties and their shared stances on international issues are evidence of that," Iran's official Islamic

Republic News Agency said.

As China and the United States have been increasingly becoming global rivals, Iran has remained at odds with the United States over a nuclear deal.

The Chinese and Iranian leaders also discussed the 2015 nuclear deal that Washington withdrew from nearly three years ago.

Under the deal originally struck with six major powers -- Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States -- Iran agreed to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of sanctions. — Kyodo News ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Cypriot "national cheese" halloumi gets EU's protected status: minister

CYPRUS' "national cheese" halloumi has been recognized by the European Commission as a product of Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) after an examination process that lasted more than 15 years, Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment Costas Kadis said Saturday.

Kadis told CyBC state radio that a formal announcement is expected to be made on Monday by the European Commission, the European Union (EU)'s executive arm.

Cypriot President Nicos Anastasiades hailed the decision, saying that it was the result of "a long and difficult effort, a difficult battle that was marked by political expediency." — Xinhua ■

321 vessels jammed around Suez Canal as salvage of stuck container ship underway

AT least 321 vessels are currently jammed around Egypt's Suez Canal awaiting salvage of the giant container ship Ever Given that has been stuck and blocking the vital waterway since Tuesday, Osama Rabie, chairman of the Suez Canal Authority (SCA), said Saturday.

"The number of ships waiting now, whether in the north, the south or in the Lakes is 321. We provide them with all the logistic services they ask for," the SCA chief told a press conference in the northeastern province of Suez. "It's difficult to tell when the problem will be solved, because, as I said, the ship is huge with a large load and it is stuck in a shallow area," Rabie said. — Xinhua ■

Australia ends pandemic wage subsidy despite job loss warnings

AUSTRALIA on Sunday ended a pandemic wage subsidy scheme despite official warnings that up to 150,000 people could lose their jobs as a result.

The so-called JobKeeper scheme, which initially saw Aus\$1,500 (around US\$1,150) a fortnight paid to staff via their employers, was announced last March after Australia imposed a nationwide shutdown that left thousands queueing outside unemployment offices.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg said the programme had been an "economic lifeline" that has achieved the aim "of saving lives and saving livelihoods" over the past year.

He told reporters in Mel-

bourne there was "no doubt that there will be some businesses that will continue to do it tough" but the subsidies were always designed to be "temporary".

Australia's unemployment rate fell to 5.8 per cent in February -- down from 7.5 per cent in July -- but the Treasury estimates between 100,000 and 150,000 jobs could be lost as a result of the change.

Australian Council of Trade Unions president Michele O'Neil said many more workers were likely to see their hours and pay slashed.

"1.1 million workers face an uncertain future without the JobKeeper wage subsidy, which



Australia's unemployment rate fell to 5.8 per cent in February -- down from its peak of 7.5 per cent in July -- but the Treasury estimates between 100,000 and 150,000 jobs could be lost as a result of the JobKeeper scheme ending. **PHOTO: AFP**

has prevented catastrophic job losses during the pandemic and

is now being ripped away," she said. —AFP ■

Kingfisher: the DIY giant building on back of pandemic

THE coronavirus pandemic has caused the permanent closure of bricks-and-mortar retailers worldwide but European home-improvements giant Kingfisher is looking to expand, chief executive Thierry Garnier told AFP in an interview.

Kingfisher, along with rivals, have been allowed to keep stores open during the virus outbreak, enabling customers to purchase

goods and collect online orders which have soared over the past year.

Kingfisher's sales jumped seven percent in 2020 to £12.34 billion (\$16.92 billion, 14.31 billion euros) as lockdowns saw people making improvements to their homes, the company revealed in its recent annual results statement.

Online sales ballooned 158

percent compared with 2019, the British group added.

Garnier, 55, said Kingfisher is well placed to benefit further even after government restrictions are lifted, with office workers likely to some extent continue working from home.

"When you spend more time at home, the house itself becomes more important so you're going to allocate it a big-

ger budget," the Frenchman said.

"You may need to set up a proper office... so working from home is going to be positive for our sector."

Click-and-collect'

Kingfisher, which employs around 80,000 staff across Europe, plans to open smaller stores in city-centre locations. —AFP ■

181 member states support Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines

THE Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines, which was drafted by Lebanon's ambassador to the United Nations Amal Mudallali, has won the support of 181 member states, a UN spokesman said on Friday.

Brenden Varma, spokesperson for UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Volkan Bozkir, told Xinhua that the declaration, aimed at providing equitable access to the coronavirus vaccines across the world, was not "adopted" as it is not an official General Assembly document, but was "signed on to" by more than 180 member states.

The initiative reportedly aimed to raise awareness of the need to work together to defeat the pandemic while raising awareness of the low availability of vaccines to



Volkan Bozkir, president of the 75th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), chairs the informal meeting of the UNGA plenary on the Political Declaration on Equitable Global Access to COVID-19 Vaccines at the UN headquarters in New York on March 26, 2021. PHOTO: XINHUA

low and middle-income countries.

"In this regard, we welcome the efforts of countries which have donated COVID-19 vaccines and actively encourage further sharing

of vaccine doses from all countries in a position to do so, to low- and middle-income countries and other countries in need, particularly through COVAX (COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access), including

on the basis of the WHO (World Health Organization) allocation framework, for fair access and equitable allocation of COVID-19 health products," the declaration read.— Xinhua ■

Facebook freezes Venezuela president Maduro's page over COVID-19 misinformation

FACEBOOK has frozen Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's page for violating policies against spreading misinformation about COVID-19 by promoting a remedy he claims, without evidence, can cure the disease, a company spokesman said on Saturday.

Maduro in January described Carvativir, an oral solution derived from thyme, as a "miracle" medication that neutralizes the coronavirus with no side effects, a claim

doctors say is not backed by science.

Facebook has taken down a video in which Maduro promotes the medication because it violates a policy against false claims "that something can guarantee prevention from getting COVID-19 or can guarantee recovery from COVID-19."

"We follow guidance from the WHO (World Health Organization) that says there is currently no medication to cure the virus," the spokesman told Reuters. —AFP ■



Facebook has frozen Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro's page for violating policies against spreading misinformation about COVID-19 by promoting a remedy he claims, without evidence, can cure the disease, a company spokesman said on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP

Covid overwhelms Yemen and urgent aid needed: MSF

DOCTORS Without Borders (MSF) warned Saturday that the number of critically Covid-19 patients was rising across war-racked Yemen, urging assistance from donor countries and specialized groups.

"Medecins Sans Frontieres is seeing a dramatic influx of critically ill COVID-19 patients requiring hospitalization in Aden, Yemen, and many other parts of the country," MSF said on Twitter.

"We are urging all medical humanitarian organisations already present in Yemen to rapidly scale up their COVID-19 emergency response," said Raphael Veicht, MSF head of mission in the country.

The southern port city of Aden is Yemen's de facto capital, where the internationally recognised government is based after being routed from Sanaa in the north by Huthi rebels.

A Saudi-led military coalition intervened in 2015 to shore up the government, and since then the conflict has killed tens of thousands of people, mostly civilians, and displaced millions.

Already an impoverished country, six years of war in Yemen has battered the economy and left its healthcare system in ruins.

The United Nations calls the situation there the world's worst humanitarian crisis. —AFP ■

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Dated: 29th March 2021

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

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Consignees of cargo carried on M.V IAL 001 VOY. NO. (096N/S) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 29-3-2021 and cargo will be discharged into the premises of HPT where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

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

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Madagascan leader in Covid vaccine U-turn



President Andry Rajoelina, left, ran headlong into scientific scepticism after he launched a touted cure for Covid last April. **PHOTO: AFP**

MADAGASCAR'S President Andry Rajoelina walked back on his hard line stance against coronavirus vaccination Friday, accepting mass inoculation but standing by a herbal infusion he has touted as a "cure."

Rajoelina, 46, came under heavy criticism after saying at the weekend that he would not be vaccinated against Covid and was not in a hurry to roll out the

jab to the public.

He has relentlessly promoted a locally-brewed infusion, based on the anti-malarial plant artemisia, to fight the virus.

But in a statement on Friday, his office said the government will "seek and use effective vaccines" against the virus.

The decision was announced after a meeting between Rajoelina and the national medical

academy.

"It has been decided that taking vaccines is a choice and should not be compulsory," said the presidency, without giving details of which jabs will be procured. The government continued to boast the virtues of the herbal therapy named Covid-Organics or CVO, which is being sold in drink and capsule form.

"The use of the Malagasy product Covid-Organics... under the Covid-19 preventive and curative treatment is maintained and still in force," the statement said.

Experts have cautioned against the brew, saying it has not been scientifically tested to see whether it is safe or effective.

The Indian Ocean island nation has counted more than 23,000 cases of Covid-19 of which slightly over 360 have been fatal. It is currently battling a second wave of infections, notably due to the presence of a highly transmissible variant first discovered in South Africa. —AFP ■

WHO urges countries to donate 10 mn vaccine doses 'immediately'

THE WHO called Friday for the donation of 10 million Covid-19 vaccine doses to ensure that every country could start immunising within the first 100 days of 2021.

The World Health Organization's director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that a rush to secure vaccines had delayed deliveries that the Covax scheme for bringing jabs to poorer nations had been counting on.

He urged countries that could do so to donate spare doses to the facility.

Tedros had called for all countries in the world to begin vaccinating within the first 100 days of the year, but said that so far, 36 countries had still yet to receive a single dose.

He told a press conference that 16 of those were scheduled to receive their first doses through Covax within the remaining 15 days.

However, that left 20 countries that were going to miss out.

"Getting all countries started by day 100 is a solvable problem. Covax needs 10 million doses immediately as an urgent stop-gap measure so these 20 countries can start vaccinating their health workers and older people within the next two weeks," Tedros said.

"So today I'm asking countries with doses of vaccines that have WHO emergency use listing to donate as many doses as they can to help us meet that target.

"Ten million doses is not much and it is not nearly enough, but it is a start," he said.

The Covax global vaccine-sharing scheme ensures that 92 of the poorest countries in the world can access vaccines, with the cost covered by donors. —AFP ■

Italy suffered highest deaths since WWII in 2020: stats

ITALY suffered its highest number of deaths since World War II last year due to the coronavirus pandemic, with over 100,000 deaths more than average, according to new figures Friday.

"The demographic picture of our country has undergone a profound change because of the impact of Covid-19 deaths," national statistic agency Istat said in a new report.

"In 2020, total deaths reached 746,146, the highest number ever recorded since

World War II, with an increase on the 2015-2019 average of more than 100,000 (+ 15.6 percent)."

The total number of Covid-19-related deaths has now reached more than 100,000 as Italy -- the first European country to face the full force of the pandemic 13 months ago -- faces a fresh wave of infections. The Istat figures show Italy's northern regions, which were hit first and hardest, have suffered the biggest increases in so-called excess deaths. —AFP ■

In Barcelona, 5,000 fans attend gig for Covid trial



Music fans were treated to a pre-pandemic style concert in the name of research. **PHOTO: AFP**

MUSICIANS on stage, spotlights flooding the arena and 5,000 fans dancing ecstatically: live music was back in Barcelona Saturday for a clinical trial seeking pandemic-safe ways to celebrate mass events.

"This is for one night only, so enjoy it," said a presenter at Saint Jordi Arena just minutes before the start of the gig by one of Spain's most popular bands, indie rockers Love of Lesbian.

Ahead of the party, everyone underwent mass screening and antigen tests, donning FFP2 surgical masks to attend the gig

which comes after an unprecedented year of confinement, social distancing and very little social interaction.

"I'm so very, very excited. It's been 18 months since we've been on stage and one of us up here is in tears!" shouted lead singer Santi Balmes after the first song which was appropriately called "Nobody in the streets".

And his euphoria was shared by the audience.

"It's incredible, so exciting. We'd forgotten what it was like to be around other people, it's as if it was my first-ever gig," said Jordi

Sanz who like everyone was in the mosh pit in front of the stage as all stands were left empty.

"We really wanted to do something different, to take a step towards normality," said Marina Crespo, 25, who in spite of the security measures was trying "not get too close to people, to keep a bit of distance".

Even so, the atmosphere was like travelling back to a time before the pandemic with excited crowds dancing, hugging each other and belting out songs at the top of their voices, or just drinking beers at the bar.—AFP ■



A man wearing a protection mask walks by the Spanish Steps at a deserted Piazza di Spagna in central Rome. **PHOTO: AFP**

South African official calls for building greater opportunities in BRICS countries

SOUTH Africa must build its manufacturing strength to be able to benefit from the opportunities in the markets of BRICS, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, said Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ebrahim Patel Friday.

While addressing the BRICS Business Council meeting, Patel called on the manufacturing sector to work on opening export opportunities in BRICS countries through producing detailed export opportunity studies for each BRICS country, identifying the products that can be exported and the supportive infrastructure needed.

"Manufacturing is a big driver of employment with the strongest employment multiplier. Indus-

trial Development Corporation research shows that for every one manufacturing job, another three jobs are created across the economy, in both supplier industries and services sectors," he said. "It is an earner of foreign exchange and a driver of innovation, of research and development and in times like the COVID-19 crisis, countries with capacity relied on their industries to produce food, personal protective equipment and medical supplies."

Patel said BRICS countries should build greater cohesion for sharing of ideas between industrialists on how to penetrate export markets and greater use of manufacturing networking to address technology innovation and marketing.



Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov (R-L) during an informal video conference session of the BRICS Foreign Ministers Council. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

He suggested that BRICS should develop an innovation project to bring together product development and manufacturing people to identify new opportuni-

ties where South Africa may not yet have capacity, but for which there are significant markets in BRICS and indeed beyond it. — Xinhua ■

Spain's GDP falls by 10.8 pct in 2020: INE



Spain's gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 10.8 percent in 2020, the worst since 1970. **PHOTO: AFP**

SPAIN'S gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 10.8 per cent in 2020, the worst since 1970, according to data published by the Spanish Statistical Office (INE) on Saturday.

The decline was the result of an important reduction in internal demand (consumer spending and investments) which was responsible for an 8.8 per cent drop in GDP with the remaining 2 percent due to a fall in external demand amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

It is the first annual fall in Spain's GDP since a 1.4 percent drop in 2013 and the worst annual contraction experienced by the country's economy since records began to be kept in the current format in 1970.

The previous worst year

for the Spanish economy was 2009 when GDP fell by 3.8 per cent at the height of the economic crisis.

The INE also revised its original calculation for the fourth quarter of 2020, changing the original estimate of 0.4 per cent growth for the period from October to December to zero growth.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicted last October that Spain will suffer most among developed countries from the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, with a 12.8-per cent fall in its GDP in 2020.

The INE also reported a 31.6 per cent year-on-year fall in the number of mortgages signed for purchasing houses or flats in Spain in January. — Xinhua ■

NYPD uses decoys to fight hate crime: media

THE New York Police Department will begin using undercover officers as decoys in an attempt to combat a rise in hate crimes targeting Asian-Americans in New York City, local press reported on Friday.

Plainclothes NYPD officers of Asian descent will be deployed in the city's public spaces to identify perpetrators of hate crimes and to discourage anti-Asian violence, NYPD Commissioner Dermot Shea was quoted by The Wall Street Journal as saying.

The department would also refer all unprovoked attacks on Asians in the city for investigation as possible hate crimes, police officials said. A crime designated as a hate crime carries a heavier penalty than a similar act without the designation, the report said.

New York City has experienced an increase in hate crimes against Asians since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to NYPD statistics.

For 2020, the NYPD recorded 28 hate crimes against Asians, up from three in 2019. Asians were targeted in 28 hate crimes from Jan. 1 through March 25 this year, compared with seven such crimes in the same period last year, according to the NYPD.

While the number of hate crimes counted by the NYPD is relatively small compared with other crimes, officials believe hate crimes are underreported.

"Like much of America we've seen a disturbing spike in hate crimes targeting Asian-Americans in New York City," Shea said. —AFP ■



Police officers patrol in Chinatown of New York, the United States, March 19, 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

NEWS IN BRIEF

China strengthens debt control for local SOEs

CHINA'S top state-asset regulator issued a guideline Friday on strengthening the debt risk control of local state-owned enterprises (SOEs) to effectively prevent and defuse major risks.

Local state-asset regulators should accelerate the establishment and improvement of monitoring and early-warning mechanisms to accurately identify debt risks of local SOEs, said the guideline released by the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission.

Local SOEs with prominent debt risks should be emphasized in supervision and special regulatory measures should be adopted, while constraints should be made on the size of debt and the asset-liability ratio of highly-indebted firms. —AFP ■

UN experts to probe North Korea weapons test

A UN sanctions committee focused on nuclear-armed North Korea has asked its experts to investigate Pyongyang's launch of missiles on Thursday, diplomats said.

The panel is composed of the same 15 countries that sit on the Security Council. The request to the experts was made Friday in a closed door meeting of the committee.

North Korea launched two weapons from its east coast Thursday, with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga calling them ballistic missiles.

It was North Korea's first substantive provocation since Joe Biden took power as US president in January.

The sanctions committee met after an urgent request made Thursday by the United States. —AFP ■

YUFC set final player list for next football season

ACCORDING to a statement released by the football squad, Yangon United Football Club has released their final player list for the next football season.

The team has confirmed the final squad with 31 players,

including veteran star players plus newcomers from other football clubs.

“Three of Yangon United players-: Caleb, Aung Kyaw Naing, and Zin Min Tun, will out on loan. And the contracts

of Thein Than Win, Than Paing, Kyaw Swar Lin, Htoo Khant Lwin, Soe Min Naing, and Yan Aung Kyaw were expired in December 2020.

Their positions are replaced with other players re-

cently”, said Yangon United football authorities.

“Officials have added 11 new players in total, which are nine local players and two expatriate players. Besides, Arkar Lin Myat (GK), Sithu

Moe Khant, and Zaw Win Thein from the Yangon United Youth team advance to the Senior team. The team training session will start with 31 players in total,” the team officials added. —GNLM ■

Luxembourg shock Ireland in historic World Cup qualifying win



Gerson Rodrigues fired the only goal in Luxembourg's 2022 World Cup qualifier with Ireland. **PHOTO: AFP**

LUXEMBOURG'S Red Lions secured one of the most famous wins in the Grand Duchy's sporting history with a 1-0 defeat of Ireland in their 2022 World Cup qualifier in Dublin on Saturday night.

Dynamo Kiev midfielder Gerson Rodrigues condemned the Irish to their second defeat in as many Group A games with a superb long-range effort five minutes from the end.

“It was a horrible and embarrassing night,” Ireland skipper Seamus Coleman told the BBC.

“We got what we deserved which was nothing. I don't think we demanded the ball enough and looked to break them down as quickly as we could.”

Ireland sit bottom of the group on zero points, four behind leaders Serbia and Portu-

gal who drew 2-2 in Belgrade.

Luxembourg meanwhile are a point behind the two leading teams after a rare World Cup qualifying victory for the Red Lions.

The win at the Aviva Stadium came thanks to smart play from the 25-year-old Rodrigues, who pounced on a knock-down to lash home his sixth international goal. —AFP ■

Ronaldo storms off the pitch after goal disallowed

PORTUGAL coach Fernando Santos said “it isn't possible” that what he saw as a clear goal scored by Cristiano Ronaldo in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Serbia could be ruled out.

With the scores level at 2-2 in Belgrade, Ronaldo thought he had won the game in the 93rd minute.

However, without VAR or goalline technology in use, officials decided that Serbia defender Stefan Mitrovic had cleared even though images appeared to show the ball had crossed the line.

A fuming Ronaldo was booked for his protests and at the final whistle stormed from the pitch, throwing his captain's armband to the ground.

“We scored a goal that was not given when the ball went in,” Santos told Portuguese broadcaster RTP. “In a match of this level, that isn't possible.”

Ronaldo later posted on his Instagram page: “I always give and will give everything for my country, that will never change. “But there are difficult times to deal with, especially when we feel that an entire nation is being harmed.” —AFP ■



Portugal coach Fernando Santos said “it isn't possible” that what he saw as a clear goal scored by Cristiano Ronaldo in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Serbia could be ruled out. **PHOTO: AFP**

Park stretches lead to five strokes at LPGA Kia Classic



South Korea's Park In-bee fired a three-under par 69 to seize a five-stroke lead after Saturday's third round of the LPGA Kia Classic. **PHOTO: AFP**

LPGA Hall of Famer Park In-bee of South Korea fired a three-under par 69 and stretched her lead to five strokes after Saturday's third round of the LPGA Kia Classic.

Park, a seven-time major champion seeking her 21st career LPGA title, stood on 12-under 204 after 36 holes at Aviara, north of San Diego.

“I think it's just going to be the same game plan that I

have done for last three days, and hopefully things work out just exactly the same as what we have done for three days,” Park said. “Just trying to hit a lot of fairways and greens and hopefully the putts will fall.”

After leading by only a single stroke when the day began, Park seized command as rivals stumbled, leaving England's Mel Reid, Australian Minjee Lee and South Korean Hur Mi-

jung sharing second on 209.

“I'm going to have to do something special to get it done,” Reid said.

“The game plan is to play aggressive and there's nothing to lose. I'm going to try and get as close as I can to In-bee, but she's an unbelievable golfer and she's going to be hard to beat. She doesn't make any mistakes. —AFP ■