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Myanmar keeps close cooperation with ASEAN member countries in accord with the ASEAN Charter: Senior General



State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing arrives at Soekarno Hatta Airport in Jakarta on 24 April 2021.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and delegation left Nay Pyi Taw for Jakarta, Indonesia by special flight yesterday morning to attend the ASEAN Leaders' Meeting there and were seen off by Vice-Chairman of the

State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Council members, Union ministers, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command and officials at the airport.

The Senior General was accompanied by Joint Secre-

tary of SAC Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin and officials. On arrival at the Soekarno Hatta airport in Jakarta at 11 am local standard time, the Senior General and delegation were welcomed by Chief of State Protocol Mr Andy Rachmianto of Indonesia, Ambassador of Myanmar to In-

donesia Daw Ei Ei Khin Aye, Permanent Representative of Myanmar to ASEAN U Aung Myo Myint, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Phyo Zaw Soe, and officials of Indonesia.

On arrival at the Excom Bali hall, the venue of the meeting, at ASEAN Secretariat, they were welcomed by Secretary-General of ASEAN Mr

Lim Jock Hoi and party.

Leaders of the delegations of ASEAN member states including Alternate Chairman of ASEAN Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, the secretary-general of ASEAN, ministers of ASEAN countries, deputy ministers and senior officials attended the meeting.

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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

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.

Govt provides cash, food support for
Rakhine IDPs



IDPs are receiving cash and kind in Rakhine State on 23 April.

THE ceremony to give cash and food assistance to the returning Rakhine IDPs in An Township of Rakhine State on 23 April. The officials of Western Command, Township Administrative Body Chairman U Htay Aung, departmental officials and the residents attended the ceremony.

The region military command first made an opening speech, and Township Administrative Team Chairman explained the assistance.

Then, a region command official provided K62 million for 124 households (K500,000 per

household). U Htay Aung presented 131rice bags and 6pyi of rice for 124 families to the representatives of the IDPs.

The region military personnel transported the returning IDPs to their respective homes.

The government also provided K8 million for 61 people of 16 households on 6 April — rice ration for a month, 16 solar lamps, 16 stoves, 16 baskets, 48 mosquito nets, 16 packs of family kit, 48 blankets, 36 pairs of shoes, 26 longyis, 26 men shirts and 36 women

dressess.

Then, Rakhine State Administration Council and Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) also donated K 9 million, construction materials and commodities for 122 people of 40 households in Shwe Laung Tin Village of Yathedaung Township on 15 March.

Tatmadaw and Rakhine State Administration Council systematically make arrangements for the return of displaced persons from Rakhine State. — MNA

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Myanmar keeps close cooperation with ASEAN member ...



Attending the ASEAN Summit 2021.



Holding talks with the ASEAN Chair.

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First, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam, alternate chair of ASEAN, delivered a speech. Next, the Secretary-General of ASEAN explained the holding of the meeting in three parts: (1) establishment of ASEAN community, (2) ASEAN and external relations and (3) sharing views on the regional and international issues. And then ASEAN member countries held their discussions.

In his discussion, the Senior General elaborated Myanmar's continued assistance in sustainable efforts for regional rehabilitation, its close cooperation with ASEAN member countries in accord with the ASEAN Charter and the provisions of the Southeast Asian amicability and cooperation agreement (TAC) for the successful realization of the ASEAN objectives, political changes in Myanmar and future work programmes.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam made a concluding remark, and the meeting was successfully concluded.



The ASEAN Summit in progress.

Later, the delegation led by the Senior General left Indonesia, and they were seen off at Soekarno Hatta Airport by Myanmar Ambassador to Indonesia Daw Ei Ei Khin Aye, Myanmar Permanent Representative to ASEAN U Aung Myo Myint, Military Attaché Brig-Gen Phyo Zaw Soe

and officials from Indonesia.

The Senior General and the delegation met with families of the Myanmar Embassy and Myanmar Military Attaché Office at the lounge of the airport and explained the latest political developments and future tasks of the SAC.

Then, the Senior General presented gifts and cash rewards for families of the embassy and military attaché office to the ambassador, the military attaché and the staff.

Afterwards, the Senior General and the delegation left Indonesia for Nay Pyi Taw by a special

flight and arrived back in Nay Pyi Taw Airport at about 10:45 pm Myanmar standard time, where they were welcomed back by the Vice-Senior General, members of the SAC, Union ministers, the commander of Nay Pyi Taw Command, deputy ministers and officials. —MNA



Warm conversation with the Myanmar Embassy staff.



Arriving back in Myanmar.

Union Minister U Shwe Lay inspects road, bridge development works in Shan State (East)



The MoC Union Minister and party are inspecting the road and bridge development works in Kengtung on 23 April.

UNION Minister for Construction U Shwe Lay, accompanied by Brig-Gen Myo Min Tun, Commander of the Triangle Regional Military Command, inspected the concrete paving

work of the Naungin-Wan Sai (Lwe) Road implemented by the Kengtung District's Rural Development as a strategic project on 23 April. Naungin-Wan Sai (Lwe)

Concrete Road is classified as Class A and consists of 4 miles of concrete road and 3 miles 6 furlongs of murram road. Implementing this road will benefit 17 villages, 927 households,

and more than 5,000 people. It will be a lucrative route for domestic and foreign tourists.

Afterwards, the Union Minister and party arrived at the construction site of Kengtung bypass (10 km long and 7-metre-wide) on the Meiktila-Taunggyi- Kengtung-Tachilek route.

The Union Minister and the Commander said the construction of the bypass road would help alleviate traffic congestion in the city and traffic safety and the development of the surrounding villages and areas, adding that it is necessary to meet the set standards in line with the road features.

They instructed to include the road signs and drainage

works systematically and inspected the construction work.

The official from the Bridge Department presented the status of the construction of the bridges on the Kengtung bypass and further work plans. The Union Minister instructed to systematically calculate and check the waterway situation and pay special attention to the quality of the bridges due to the new road construction.

The Union Minister and the Commander inspected the mechanical widening, adjusting the slope of the road for the ups and downs of the mountain, the current condition of the road and planned a new lane and instructed the officials on the work requirements.— MNA

Myanmar-India border trade growths by \$84.6 mln this FY

THE value of border trade between Myanmar and India soared to US\$160 million between 1 October and 16 April period of the current financial year, an increase of \$84.6 million, according to the statistics report of the Ministry of Commerce.

The Myanmar-India total border trade was shared by Myanmar's export of \$ 160 million and its import of \$0.8 million.

During the same period last year, India-Myanmar bilateral trade was \$76.28 million in total. The country conducts border trade with neighbouring India through Tamu, Reed and Thantlang border trade camps.

In contrast, a significant part of bilateral trade is delivered through ships.

During almost seven

months of this FY, the trade value was registered at over \$ 31.5 million via Tamu border and \$129.4 million via Reed. But, there was no recorded trading at the Thantlang camp.

Myanmar exports mung beans, pigeon peas, green grams, areca nuts, ginger, saffron, turmeric, bay leaves, fishery products, fruits, and vegetables to India. At the same time, it imports pharmaceuticals, oil cakes, electronic appliances, motorbikes, steel and other construction machines and building materials from the neighbouring country.

India is one of Myanmar's top trading partners. The two countries inked a bilateral border trade agreement in 1994. — ACM/GLNM

Traders request reopening of Mang Wein in Muse border trade camp

THE traders asked for the reopening of the closed Mang Wein checkpoint at the Muse border trade point, said U Min Thein, the chair of Muse 105th Mile Rice Wholesale Centre.

Some crossing on the China side have been closed because of COVID-19. The exports of Myanmar cargo are not available recently. That is why the traders are asking the authorities to reopen the closed broders as soon as possible, he added.

"Muse border trading will grow only after reopening the gates rapidly by China. If they are continually closing the crossing indefinitely, the Muse border trading will be halted completely. Thus, we requested the authorities to reopen the closed bro-

ders," U Min Thein clarified.

On 29 March, a Myanmar national was found to be COVID-19 positive in the Kyauk Wine market in Kyalgaung. The next day, China restricted the border crossing at the Mang Wein checkpoint, which is one of the major border crossings between Muse and Kyalgaung.

Subsequently, the main export stuff — rice and broken rice, pulses, aquatic products, onion and chilli to China through the Mang Wein checkpoint were 100 per cent suspended.

In the first wave of COVID-19, there is minor damage as China permits the passage of cargo trucks under the driver changing system but suspended the passing of travellers. Now,

China doesn't allow entry even though trucks can affect 100 per cent.

The five land borders linking China and Myanmar are Muse and in northern Shan State, Lwejel in Kachin State, Chin Shwehaw in northeastern Shan State, Kampaiti in Kachin State and Kengtung in eastern Shan State, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

However, Muse border sees an enormous volume and value of border trade with an estimated value of more than US\$2.53 billion this FY between 1 October and 16 April, a decrease of over \$35.3 million compared with the last year's figures of \$3.35 million, the Ministry of Commerce's data showed. —NN

Rioters attack security forces: one killed and one injured

RIOTERS attacked the vehicle carrying the suspects with homemade guns in Katha Township, Sagaing Township, on 23 April. One member of the security forces was killed, and one was wounded due to the attack.

The incident happened at around 4 pm when members of the security forces were on the way taking Aung Ko Htet, 28, a resident of Aung Zeya Ward. He was arrested under Section

505-A of the Criminal Code to the Katha prison.

The security forces reinforced at the scene and opened fired on the rioters, dispersing the mob at around 5:50 pm.

The suspect was taken to the Katha prison.

Security forces are reportedly working to identify and arrest those involved in the violence and take effective action under the law. — MNA



Muse border sees an enormous volume and value of border trade with an estimated value of more than US\$2.53 billion this FY between 1 October and 16 April, a decrease of over \$35.3 million compared with the last year's figures of \$3.35 million.

Announcement of Union Election Commission
23 April 2021

1. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of Sumprabum, Shwegu and Bhamo townships of Kachin State.
2. 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 CS
1	12 polling stations in Sumprabum township of Kachin State	2,786	4,297	8		72
2	54 polling stations in Shwegu township of Kachin State	65,688	56,347	4,648	178	4,358
3	69 polling stations in Bhamo township of Kachin State	94,244	76,788	4,344	453	8,154

3. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Sumprabum, Shwegu and Bhamo townships of Kachin State together with the respective township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrators under Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law.

4. According to the inspection, a total of 135 polling stations in these three townships took out 181,528 ballots and used 126,283 ballots. It left 55,122 ballots instead of 55,245 ballots. The difference was 201ballots and it found 78 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations. Findings were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

Sr	Subject	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Sumprabum	12	3,150	2,471	679	679		
2	Shwegu	54	74,539	52,579	21,960	21,906	85	31
3	Bhamo	69	103,839	71,233	32,606	32,537	116	47
	Total	135	181,528	126,283	55,245	55,122	201	78

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Samprabum Township

5. A total of 12 polling stations in 3 Wards and 9 Village-tracts of Sumprabum Township in Kachin State took out 3,150 ballots and used 2,471ballots. It left 679 ballots while the exact remaining ballot is 679. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village -tract ballots	3,100	2,449	651	651		
2	Township Remaining ballots	50	22	28	28		
	Total	3,150	2,471	679	679		

6. The UEC has released the findings on voter lists and ballot papers of 137 townships. It found the differences in the withdrawals, used ballots, exact remaining ballots and remaining on the ground. The extra and shortage of ballots were also found at the respective polling stations. But there is no difference in withdrawals, used ballots and remaining ballots of Sumprabum Township.

7. For Pyithu Hluttaw constituency of Sumprabum Township, the USDP candidate was elected while another two USDP candidates for Kachin State Amyotha Hluttaw Constituency (1) (Putao) and for Constituency (1) of Sumprabum Township, and Kachin State People’s Party (KSPP) candidate for Constituency (2) of Sumprabum Township. None of the NLD candidates won the seats in Sumprabum Township.

8. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/Village-Tracts	Total Polling Stations	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	Khinduyan Village-tract	1	150	125	25	25		
2	Phoneinyan Village-tract	1	450	346	104	104		
3	Ingawma Village-tract	1	50	39	11	11		
4	Kabayankhu Ward	1	200	192	8	8		
5	Myoma Ward	1	600	538	62	62		

6	Wasatkhu Ward	1	200	150	50	50		
7	Intergalu Village-tract	1	150	89	61	61		
8	Zanankha Village-tract	1	100	57	43	43		
9	Minehtaung Village-tract	1	150	114	36	36		
10	Khakayanran Village-tract	1	500	393	107	107		
11	Kawarpan Village-tract	1	300	230	70	70		
12	Bwutkha Village-tract	1	250	176	74	74		
	Ward/village -tract ballots	12	3,100	2,449	651	651		
	Township Remaining ballots		50	22	28	28		
	Total	12	3,150	2,471	679	679		

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Shwegu Township

9. A total of 54polling stations in 8 Wards and 28 Village-tracts of Shwegu Township in Bhamo District of Kachin State took out 74,539 ballots and used 52,579 ballots. It left only 21,906ballots instead of 21,960. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective poll stations. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village -tract ballots	67,000	52,338	14,662	14,606	85	29
2	Township Remaining ballots	7,539	241	7,298	7,300		2
	Total	74,539	52,579	21,960	21,906	85	31

10. It found only 21,906 remaining ballots instead of 21,960 and so 85 ballots were missing and there were 31 extra ballots.

11. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/Village-Tracts	Total Polling Stations	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
							Missing	Extra
1	No 1 Ward	2	3,600	2,585	1,015	1,010	6	1
2	No 2 Ward	2	3,250	2,586	664	660	5	1

3	No 3 Ward	1	2,350	1,937	413	405	8	
4	No 4 Ward	2	4,900	3,263	1,637	1,635	2	
5	Naungmoe Village-tract	2	1,050	818	232	228	4	
6	Thinbawinn Village-tract	2	1,650	1,355	295	288	7	
7	Moesit Village-tract	1	1,750	1,432	318	318		
8	Ngarbatgyi Village-tract	2	1,750	1,474	276	274	2	
9	Pantin Village-tract	1	1,350	1,133	217	212	5	
10	Sithar Village-tract	1	1,250	993	257	257		
11	Sithaung Village-tract	1	1,550	1,301	249	249		
12	Sinphot V illage-tract	1	1,150	900	250	250		

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13	Manweain Village-tract	1	1,200	996	204	204		
14	Myogone Village-tract	1	2,000	1,461	539	547		8
15	Sithaw Village-tract	2	2,100	1,670	430	422	8	
16	Simaw Village-tract	1	1,350	1,136	214	214		
17	Yaylae Village-tract	1	2,200	1,868	332	336		4
18	Shwebontha Village-tract	2	2,150	1,761	389	391		2
19	Teinhoun Village-tract	1	1,900	1,349	551	541	10	
20	Thayetkone Village-tract	1	1,900	1,571	329	327	2	
21	Bogon Village-tract	2	2,900	2,032	868	868		
22	Maniauuga Village-tract	2	2,750	2,216	534	535	1	2
23	Thabyayhla Village-tract	1	1,350	1,084	266	270		4
24	Kyaukkyi Village-tract	3	3,000	2,288	712	712		
25	Tawpone Village-tract	3	5,150	4,020	1,130	1,122	8	
26	Seiktha Village-tract	3	2,150	1,743	407	407	2	2

27	Hsintat Village-tract	1	1,750	1,448	302	302		
28	Simugyi Village-tract	1	1,200	971	229	229		
29	Naunglatgyi Village-tract	2	2,400	1,778	622	615	12	5
30	Shwechaungtha Village-tract	1	1,050	836	214	213	1	
31	No 1 Ward, Myohla	1	300	215	85	85		
32	No 2 Ward, Myohla	1	350	298	52	50	2	
33	No 3 Ward, Myohla	1	350	299	51	51		
34	No 4 Ward, Myohla	1	300	219	81	81		
35	Minkyaunggon Village-tract	2	1,050	882	168	168		
36	Amatgyigon Village-tract	1	550	420	130	130		
Ward/village -tract ballots		54	67,000	52,338	14,662	14,606	85	29
Township Remaining ballots			7,539	241	7,298	7,300		2
Total		54	74,539	52,579	21,960	21,906	85	31

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in Bhamo Township

12. A total of 69 polling stations in 16 Wards and 42 Village-tracts of Bhamo Township in Bhamo District of Kachin State took out 103,839 ballots and used 71,233 ballots. It left only 32,537 ballots instead of 32,606. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective poll stations. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Subject	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remain- ing	Remaining on the Ground	Difference	
						Missing	Extra
1	Ward/village -tract ballots	95,748	70,068	25,680	25,611	116	47
2	Township Remaining ballots	8,091	1,165	6,926	6,926		
	Total	103,839	71,233	32,606	32,537	116	47

13. It found only 32,537 remaining ballots instead of 32,606 and so 116 ballots were missing and there were 47 extra ballots.

14. Findings were as follows:

Sr	Ward/Vil- lage-Tracts	Total Polling Stations	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Differ- ence	
							Missing	Extra
1	Thyasi Ward	2	6,400	4,072	2,328	2,326	2	
2	Myama Ward	1	550	477	73	73		
3	Mingon Ward	1	1,200	855	345	345		
4	Minkyaunggon Ward	1	1,400	1,010	390	390		
5	Nyaungpin Ward	2	4,950	3,561	1,389	1,389		
6	Naungkho Ward	2	5,700	4,099	1,601	1,557	44	
7	Shwekyeena Ward	1	1,950	1,622	328	332		4
8	Nantphar Ward	2	3,300	2,389	911	911		
9	Aungtha Ward	1	1,650	1,006	644	644		
10	Shwepyitha Ward	1	2,900	1,927	973	969	4	
11	Siinn Village-tract	1	2,000	1,419	581	581		
12	Naunglite Village-tract	1	950	670	280	279	1	
13	Manyay Village-tract	1	500	373	127	129		2
14	Maupin Village-tract	1	900	712	188	190		2
15	Malular Village-tract	1	750	583	167	163	4	
16	Nanthlaing Village-tract	1	800	635	165	165		
17	Khuule Village-tract	1	500	340	160	160		
18	Moephein Village-tract	1	2,100	1,680	420	418	2	
19	Tarminelone Village-tract	1	900	696	204	197	7	
20	Hsainkin Village-tract	1	198	161	37	37		
21	Helonthit Village-tract	1	800	689	111	111		
22	Helonhaung Village-tract	1	150	111	39	39		
23	Kywegyokambani Village-tract	1	1,000	758	242	242		
24	Chaungwa Village-tract	1	400	339	61	61		
25	Teinthaw Village-tract	1	1,750	1,495	255	263		8
26	Sintkin Village-tract	1	2,000	1,725	275	267	8	
27	Hngatpyawtaw Village-tract	1	650	521	129	127	2	
28	Thaphanpin Village-tract	1	1,050	892	158	154	4	

29	Kyungyi Village-tract	1	1,350	906	444	441	3	
30	Minekar Village-tract	1	700	410	290	282	8	
31	Konekha Village-tract	1	800	615	185	185		
32	Manpin Village-tract	1	250	164	86	86		
33	Khuntha Ward	2	3,900	2,865	1,035	1,034	2	1
34	Paukkon Ward	3	6,250	4,698	1,552	1,552	2	2
35	Thiri Ward	1	1,450	882	568	568		
36	Hsinkon Ward	1	1,100	844	256	256		
37	Alaeyat Ward	1	600	496	104	106		2
38	Myacide Village-tract	1	950	687	263	265		2
39	Parpaung Village-tract	1	1,800	1,329	471	475		4
40	Manmalin Village-tract	1	2,550	1,770	780	776	4	
41	Kaungsint Village-tract	1	950	779	171	169	2	
42	Yayni Village-tract	1	650	502	148	148		
43	Kantha Village-tract	1	300	242	58	56	2	
44	Naungmoe Village-tract	1	1,300	864	436	436		
45	Sinnkhan Village-tract	3	4,350	2,959	1,391	1,393		2
46	Letpantan Village-tract	1	700	557	143	143		
47	Kaungton Village-tract	1	1,250	1,091	159	165		6
48	Sarwadi Village-tract	1	1,350	1,111	239	239		
49	Nyaungpintha Village-tract	1	1,600	1,142	458	462		4
50	Konmahat Village-tract	1	1,650	1,268	382	378	4	
51	Hante Ward	3	5,900	3,929	1,971	1,969	4	2
52	Kanbani Village-tract	1	1,200	923	277	277		
53	Theinlin Village-tract	1	1,600	1,293	307	311		4
54	Manyut Village-tract	1	950	651	299	292	7	
55	Sihae Village-tract	1	850	665	185	185		
56	Manphar Village-tract	1	550	456	94	96		2
57	Khokyin Village-tract	1	900	675	225	225		
58	Mankhun Village-tract	1	600	478	122	122		
Ward/village -tract ballots		69	95,748	70,068	25,680	25,611	116	47
Township Remaining ballots			8,091	1,165	6,926	6,926		
Total		69	103,839	71,233	32,606	32,537	116	47

Union Election Commission

Plan to reopen final-year courses, master’s courses (written test) opened at universities, degree colleges, colleges under Higher Education Department of Education Ministry

UNIVERSITIES, degree colleges and colleges under the department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education will reopen the final-year courses and master’s courses (written test) which were conducted in the 2019-2020 academic year, as of 5 May 2021.

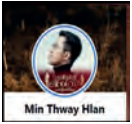
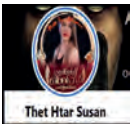
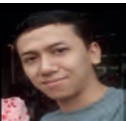
8 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 24 April, total figure rises to 142,712

MYANMAR’S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **142,712** after **8 new cases** were reported on 24 April 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **131,930** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Those spreading false news to affect State stability charged under Section 505-A

THE following celebrities and people have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for intentionally committing incitements to the government employees to join CDM to affect government mechanism and for spreading information showing their support for unlawful CRPH including fake news and other information to unrest riots and threaten the public on the social media.

The list of people charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code

Sr	Account name	Profile	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo	Sr	Account name	Profile	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	DAUNG https://www.facebook.com/daung.actor	Daung (aka) Thura Aung 	Yankin Township, Yangon Region (Temporary resident in Thailand)	505-a		10	Ei Thinzar Maung https://www.facebook.com/etzm.dpns/	Ei Thinzar Maung 	Pabedan Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
2	May Myat Noe https://www.facebook.com/maymyatnoeofficialpage	May Myat Noe 	Dawbon Township, Yangon Region	505-a		11	Kaung Myat Thu https://www.facebook.com/kkg.kmt	Kaung Myat Thu 	ChaungU Township, Sagaing Region	505-a	
3	May https://www.facebook.com/mayofficial.mm	May 	Kayan Township, Yangon Region	505-a		12	Kyaw Naing Oo (Rahta) https://www.facebook.com/rahta.rain	Kyaw Naing Oo 	Hline Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
4	PhoneSett Thwin https://www.facebook.com/phonesett.thwin	Phone Sett Thwin 	Mingalar Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region	505-a		13	Oakar Chan Nyein (Koe) https://www.facebook.com/oakar.c.nyein	Oakar Chan Nyein 	Mawlamyine Township, Mon State	505-a	
5	Min Thway Hlan https://www.facebook.com/minthway.hlan.3	Min Thway Hlan 	Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region	505-a		14	Ye Min (A A C) https://www.facebook.com/ye.min.54738	Ye Min Kyi 	Myawady Township, Kayin State	505-a	
6	Thet Htar Susan https://www.facebook.com/helen.susan.73	Thet Htar Susan 	Dagon Myothit Township (North), Yangon Region	505-a		15	Thant Zin Aung https://www.facebook.com/thantzin.aungnld	Thant Zin Aung 	Myawady Township, Kayin State	505-a	
7	Sein Duuwar Mingalarsain https://www.facebook.com/seinduwar	Sein Duuwar 	Chanmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region	505-a		16	Neonatal Chef https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=10001265w2424437	Kyaw Swa Chan Myay 	Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
8	Melvin Moe https://www.facebook.com/melvin.moe.52	Thar Moe (aka) Ko Moe 	Temporary resident in Singapore	505-a		17	Shwe Pon https://www.facebook.com/shwe.pon	Dr Shwe Pon 	Bago Township, Bago Region	505-a	
9	Sithu Aung Myint https://www.facebook.com/sithu.aungmyint	Sithu Aung Myint 	Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region	505-a		18	Yoon ThiRi Shwe Sin https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006771347917	Yoon ThiRi Shwe Sin 	Toungoo Township, Bago Region	505-a	

Files opened against medical doctors who participated in CDM activity with attempts to deteriorate peace and stability of the State

THE following medical doctors have been charged under Section 505-A of the Penal Code for inciting State service personnel and health staff to participate in CDM activities, themselves participating in it, supporting CDM activities and CRPH unlawful association with the aim of deteriorating the State administrative machinery.

Sr	Name	Hospital	Address	Section of Penal Code	Photo
1	Dr Ei Ei Ko (Specialist)	Kengtung People's Hospital	Kengtung Town, Shan State (East)	505-a	
2	Dr Tin Tun Oo (Specialist)	Kengtung People's Hospital	Kengtung Town, Shan State (East)	505-a	
3	Dr Than Tun Win (Assistant Surgeon)	Pyinmana People's Hospital	Pyinmana Town, Nay Pyi Taw	505-a	
4	Dr Moe Pwint Aung (Assistant Surgeon)	Pyinmana People's Hospital	Monywa Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
5	Dr Khin Yadanar Soe (Assistant Surgeon)	Pyinmana People's Hospital	Pyinmana Town, Pyinmana People's Hospital compound	505-a	
6	Dr Khin Khin Thant (Assistant Surgeon)	Lewe People's Hospital	Monywa Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	
7	Dr Hsu Mon Aung (Assistant Surgeon)	Lewe People's Hospital	Kyaukpadaung Town, Mandalay Region	505-a	
8	Dr Aung Min (Assistant Surgeon)	Paunglaung Station Hospital	Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw	505-a	
9	Dr Sai Han Khay Hlaing (Assistant Surgeon)	Ottarathiri Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital	Pobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw	505-a	
10	Dr Zaw Pyae Paing (Assistant Surgeon)	Ottarathiri Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital	Yemathin Town, Mandalay Region	505-a	
11	Dr Aye Thanda Kyi (Assistant Surgeon)	Ottarathiri Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital	Hinthada Town, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
12	Dr Kyaw Min Tun (Assistant Surgeon)	Mawlamyinegyun People's Hospital	Mawlamyinegyun Town, Ayeyawady Region	505-a	
13	Dr Ye Myint Kyaw (Specialist)	Yangon Children's Hospital	Dagon Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
14	Dr Zin Min Min Lat (Head of Township Public Health Department)	Batahtaung Township, Township Public Health Department	Sangyoung Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
15	Dr Chaw Chaw Win (Specialist)	North Okkalapa People's Hospital	North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region	505-a	
16	Dr Thida Soe (Assistant Surgeon)	Loikaw People's Hospital	Loikaw Town, Kayah State	505-a	
17	Dr Khine Zin Win (Specialist)	Namhkam People's Hospital	Namhkam Town, Shan State (North)	505-a	
18	Dr Nyi Mann (Assistant Surgeon)	Tangyan People's Hospital	Tangyan Town, Shan State (North)	505-a	
19	Dr Kyaw Thu Win (Assistant Surgeon)	Namhkam People's Hospital	Namhkam Town, Shan State (North)	505-a	
20	Dr Su Su Win (Specialist)	Monywa People's Hospital	Monywa Town, Sagaing Region	505-a	

Among them, Dr Thida Soe (Assistant Surgeon) of Loikaw Township People's Hospital, Dr Khine Zin Win (Assistant Surgeon) and Dr Kyaw Thu Win of Namhkam People's Hospital, Dr Nyi Mann ((Assistant Surgeon) of Tangyan People's Hospital and Dr Su Su Win (Specialist) of Monywa People's Hospital participated in CDM activities without performing medical treatments at assigned hospitals but gave medical treatments at private hospitals/clinics according to the documentary photos.

As tasks are being carried out to arrest those medical doctors charged, action will be taken against the persons under the law for admitting those medical doctors, and work licences of the private hospitals/clinics which allowed them to give medical treatments will be closed. Deterrent action will be taken against owners of these hospitals/clinics under the law. Action will be taken against any health staff under the law for taking charges of providing healthcare services to the people and giving assistance to private hospitals/clinics with participation in CDM activities without discharging assigned duty. Severe action will be taken against owners of private hospitals/clinics which admit those medical doctors and health staff for supporting the CDM participants.

Venerable Sayadaws, government staff, locals receive COVID-19 vaccines

TATMADAW keeps launching COVID-19 vaccination programmes for the elderly over 65, departmental officials, ethnic nationals, including Venerable Sayadaws in their respective military command areas.

Tatmadaw medical teams provided medical check-ups and COVID-19 vaccines for Venerable Sayadaws, departmental staff and residents in Taunggyi,

Nyaung Shwe, Kalaw, Yaksawk, Pekon, Hopong, Hsihseng, Pinlaung, Ywangan and Pindaya townships of Shan State (South), Loikaw Township of Kayah State, Kangyidaunt, Nyaungdon, Pantanaw and Ingapu townships of Ayeyawady Region by cooperating with the medics and health-care workers of public hospitals.

— MNA



Tatmadaw medical teams are administering COVID vaccine jabs to locals in Taunggyi.

Tatmadaw continue providing healthcare services to civilians



Residents are receiving treatments at the Tatmadaw hospital.

MILITARY hospitals in the townships of regions and states are giving medical treatments to the people to solve their difficulties in healthcare services. A total of 161,319 outpatients and 4,168 inpatients reached these hospitals from 5 February to date. Senior medical experts, medics and nurses have conducted 7,588 major operations and 3,878 minor opera-

tions. The senior doctors treat the severe cases. These hospitals managed for the birth of 10,032 babies, while 10,032 pregnant women were taken to the respective military hospitals. In addition to providing medical care to patients in need of hospitalization, Tatmadaw is making arrangements for the well-being of hospitalized patients and caregivers. — MNA

Tatmadaw medical teams provide healthcare in township hospitals

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

The Tatmadaw medical team continued to provide healthcare related to surgery, dental and oral healthcare, osteoporosis, obstetrics, gynecology, hypertension and heart disease to the patients in Thazi Township Hospital, Hanza hospital, Yinmabin hospital, Tagaung Public Hospital in Thabeikkyin Township, Mattaya Hospital, Sintgaing hospital in Kyaukse township, Yintaw hospital, Myittha

Public Hospital and Kume Hospital in Pyawbwe township Wailaung hospital in Taungtha Township, Kyaukpadaung Hospital, Thayawady District Hospital, Donzayit hospital in Shwegyin Township and Latpadan township hospital yesterday.

Officials from re-

spective commands also inspected the medical services at the hospitals and comforted the patients by providing food aids and necessary things. It is reported that local residents are satisfied with the medical supports of Tatmadaw.

— MNA



Tatmadaw medics are providing healthcare to locals in Latpadan.

Police seized weapons used in riots

THE security forces seized 13jingalis and other materials at the house of Kyaw Min Thu, son of U Kyaw Sein in Shwechi Ward of Pyinmana Township on 23 April.

The police also raided the houses of U Hlaing, son of U Thaung and Thet Wai Lwin, son of U Htay Lwin in Shwegu (19) Ward of Mogok Township and Kaw Sein(aka) Kyaw Kyaw Lwin, son of U Maung Win in North Okkalapa Township of Yangon Region and arrested them together with the homemade weapons on the same day.

Similarly, the security forces also raided the house of U Yar (still investigating) in Aung Chan Tha Ward of Mogok in Mandalay Region and did

not find the suspect but the weapons.

The security forces confiscated some arms including shields, jingalis, catapults and petrol bombs in an unoccupied compound in Kan Kaut Ward of Chanayethazan Township.

Moreover, the police examined the motorcycle driven by Ye Htet Aung, son of U San Wai and Toe Win Aung, son of U Min Myat Khine leading to Thein Seik Village from Chaung Sount Village on Moe Kaung-Chaung Sount road in Thaton Township of Mon State and found some weapons used in riots from the backpack of Toe Win Aung.

According to the tip-off, the police raided “Ma Ei” Store lo-



Confiscated weapons used in riots.

cated in Pyi Gyi Myat Sin Ward of Chanayethazan Township of Mandalay Region and found various types of materials used in riots. Moreover, the police also found the weapons in the compound of No (13) B.E.PS in

No (7) Ward of Thakayta Township of Yangon Region, and in the drain near the water pipe of Gyo Phyu reservoir in North Okkalapa Township.

The security forces also detained 7 people –Lain Han

Lain, Htan Ki Ki, Ma Lay Aung Awal, Ma Lain Ki Ti, Ma Ki Lain Hein, Ma Shein Awal and Ma May Hinin Oo for sticking the anti-government papers near Bogyoke statue of Myoma Zay junction in San Pya Ward of Mindat.

Similarly, the police arrested 2men in Thabyay Nyunt Ward of Than Hlat Hmaw West Ward of Mahaaungmyay Township and another 3men and 4women in Nan Taw Gone Ward of Meiktila Township with their homemade weapons.

Those arrested will face effective legal actions, and investigations are underway to capture the rest of the suspects.—MNA

Most major companies failing climate targets - study



Oil companies, major producers of greenhouse gas emissions, are targeted by climate litigators and activists. Here, before the Supreme Court in New York on the first day of the Exxon Mobil trial, October 22, 2019. **PHOTO: AFP**

FEWER than one in four of the world's largest companies are on track to meet basic climate change targets, according to a new study published on Thurs-

day. Findings of the survey of nearly 700 listed firms in 14 countries from 2015 to 2019 were unveiled on the day US

President Joe Biden launches a virtual climate summit.

According to British investment firm Arabesque, just under a quarter (24.84 per cent) of the world's large listed companies have taken action to limit global warming to 1.5 Celsius.

European companies are the best performers, particularly in Sweden (50 per cent), Germany (39.29 per cent) and Finland (33.33 per cent). France is just behind (32.5 per cent), followed by Britain and the United States (both on 23.08 per cent). China (8.51 per cent) and Australia (4.55 per cent) trail behind.

But the study found that 15 per cent of the companies listed on leading indices, including the FTSE 100, S&P 100, DAX and Nikkei, do not publish their

greenhouse gas emissions. The proportion even increases to 29 per cent for the Chinese Hang Seng.

The 2015 Paris Agreement seeks to limit global warming at 2.0 degrees Celsius (5.4 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels, and if possible, no more than 1.5 Celsius. The 1.5-degree target is proving difficult to achieve but 70 per cent of firms are expected to meet the 2.0-degree figure by 2030.

"Declarations of good intention by themselves are not going to lead to the required timely actions," said Arabesque chairman Georg Kell. "In fact, despite the growing number of commitments, average carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have increased since 2015. This year is a potential

turning point, offering corporate leaders a chance to think big and to act accordingly. But time is running out."

Biden has invited 40 world leaders to a virtual Earth Day summit, including China's President Xi Jinping and his counterpart Vladimir Putin of Russia.

European lawmakers in Brussels on Wednesday reached a last-minute agreement with member states on a net reduction of "at least 55 per cent" of greenhouse gas emissions by 2030.

Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Tuesday vowed an ambitious 78 per cent cut to carbon emissions by 2035 compared to 1990 levels - 15 years earlier than once planned. —AFP ■

VW demands billion-euro 'dieselgate' payout from ex-CEO: report

AUTO giant Volkswagen is seeking more than a billion euros (\$1.2 billion) in damages from ex-CEO Martin Winterkorn over the "dieselgate" emissions cheating scandal, German media reported on Friday.

The sum would be the highest ever claim for damages against a company executive in Germany, according to the Sueddeutsche Zeitung newspaper.

Volkswagen has written to Winterkorn to demand the sum, the bulk of which is likely to be covered by his liability insurance, the report said, without citing its sources.

Volkswagen and a source close to Winterkorn both declined to comment when contacted by AFP.

The Volkswagen group was plunged into crisis in 2015 when it admitted to installing cheating software in 11 million diesel vehicles worldwide to dupe pollution tests.

The scandal, based on allegations from the US Environmental Protection Agency, has so far cost the German car giant more than 30 billion euros (\$35 billion) in fines, legal costs and compensation.

VW said in March it would be demanding compensation from Winterkorn, as well as Rupert Stadler, the former head of its Audi division, for "breach of duty" in connection with the affair. The company did not reveal how much it was seeking then. —AFP ■

Panasonic to buy AI logistics firm Blue Yonder for \$7.1 bn

PANASONIC will buy American AI supply chain software firm Blue Yonder for \$7.1 billion, the Japanese company said Friday.

The deal will make Blue Yonder a wholly owned subsidiary of the Japanese electronics giant, which has held 20 per cent of the US firm's shares since July last year.

Following regulatory approval, the deal will be one of the biggest acquisitions in Panasonic's history.

Blue Yonder has more than 3,000 clients worldwide, including multinationals Walmart and Coca Cola as well as airlines and couriers such as FedEx.

"The need for more intelligent, autonomous and edge-aware supply chains has been dramatically heightened by the



Blue Yonder has more than 3,000 clients worldwide, including multinationals Walmart and Coca Cola as well as airlines and couriers such as FedEx. **PHOTO: AFP**

Covid-19 pandemic," Panasonic said in a statement, citing "drastic shifts in supply demand" due to virus lockdowns.

The firm said the merger

would allow it to gain expertise in "state-of-the-art" artificial intelligence technology, and would work to reduce waste in supply chains. —AFP ■

Start spreading the news: New York wants tourists back

NEW YORK City announced a \$30 million advertising campaign Wednesday designed to entice tourists back to the Big Apple and revive an economy ravaged by the coronavirus pandemic.

Mayor Bill de Blasio described the marketing blitz, dubbed "NYC Reawakens" and set to launch in June, as the city's "largest-ever" drive to promote tourism. "We need to let people know we're open for business," he told reporters.

"It's safe, come here. Join this amazing moment. Come to this city that's been so heroic during

this crisis," De Blasio added. New York is gradually reopening on the back of a vigorous vaccination rollout that is keeping Covid-19 positivity rates around five percent.

Sports teams including the New York Yankees and New York Knicks are playing in front of fans again while museums, restaurants and some shows are operating at reduced capacities.

Broadway, however, is not due to restart until September, although officials haven't ruled out an earlier return. —AFP ■



Volkswagen is demanding compensation from ex-CEO Martin Winterkorn for "breach of duty" in connection with the "dieselgate" scandal. **PHOTO: AFP**

Fresh COVID emergency could dampen Japan's economic recovery hope

JAPAN'S fresh state of emergency over the coronavirus pandemic threatens to nip hopes for an economic recovery in the bud by further weakening consumption, economists warned.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared Friday a third state of emergency, effective from Sunday through May 11 in Tokyo as well as the western prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo, in an effort to curb a surge in COVID-19 during the upcoming Golden Week holidays, usually one of the busi-

est times of the year for travel.

Under the declaration, local authorities will impose tougher restrictions including the closure of establishments that serve alcohol, department stores and shopping malls.

Due to the impact of the emergency measures, "the economy will possibly see a negative growth in the current quarter," said Keiji Kanda, a senior economist at the Daiwa Institute of Research.

Many analysts had expected Japan's econ-

omy to rebound in the April-June period from a downturn in the previous quarter when the second state of emergency was in place for parts of the country including Tokyo, Osaka and other urban areas, notably hitting the food services industry with restaurants and bars requested to close early. Gross domestic product data for January to March is scheduled to be released next month. But economists are already pessimistic enough to forecast contraction in the world's third-largest economy.—Kyodo News ■



People wearing face masks walk in Osaka's Minami area on April 23, 2021. Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga declared a state of emergency the same day in Tokyo and the western Japan prefectures of Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo amid a rapid resurgence of coronavirus infections. PHOTO: KYODO

Pandemic pushes UK state borrowing to peacetime record



Retail sales by volume rose 5.4 per cent in March from February. PHOTO: AFP

EMERGENCY pandemic support measures sent UK annual borrowing rocketing to the highest level since World War II, official data showed on Friday. Public sector net

borrowing – the state's preferred measure of the deficit – ballooned to a record £303.1 billion (£349.8bn euros) in the year to March, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

And it was equivalent to 14.5 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) – the highest proportion since 1946 when it stood at 15.2 per cent. Borrowing sky-rocketed in the 2020-2021 financial year as the UK government rushed to cushion the economic blow of COVID. And it contrasted sharply with borrowing of just £57.1 billion in 2019-2020.

"The coronavirus pandemic has had a substantial impact on the economy and subsequently on public sector borrowing and debt," the ONS said.—AFP ■

Diesel car sales down in Europe

DIESEL car sales have plummeted in Europe in the first quarter of the year, representing only 23.2 per cent of sales as opposed to 30 per cent during the same period last year, according to data released on Friday by car manufacturers.

"Hybrid electric vehicles made up 18.4 per cent of total passenger car sales in the EU, almost doubling their market share in a year," the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association said. "Demand for electrically-chargeable cars also increased during these three months: battery electric vehicles

made up 5.7 per cent of all new cars, while plug-in hybrids accounted for 8.2 per cent of EU registrations." The group said that from January to March of this year, diesel vol-

umes fell 20.1 per cent compared to a year ago, to reach 593,559 cars sold across the European Union. The volumes fell nearly 30 per cent in Germany and Spain. —AFP ■



Hybrid electric vehicles made up 18.4% of total passenger car sales in the EU, almost doubling their market share in a year. PHOTO: AFP

French fishermen prepare to block UK trucks in Brexit protest

MORE than a hundred French fishermen were readying on Thursday night to block trucks carrying fish from the UK, in a protest against a Brexit fishing deal they have dismissed as "a sham".

Protesters were spending the night at a checkpoint where lorries carrying fish from Britain into the northern French ports of Dunkirk and Calais are subject

to hygiene checks, now that the UK has left the European Union.

The fishermen set fire to pallets and tyres to stay warm at the Boulogne-sur-Mer checkpoint, in France's busiest fishing hub.

No trucks from the UK were present, AFP journalists said on Thursday, with some having changed routes after hearing of the planned

action.

British-flagged ships operated by Dutch companies, which often unload fish caught in UK waters at French ports, had also changed course towards Belgium, the harbour master's office told AFP.

A second group of protesters were settling in for the night in front of the Boulogne fish market.

"This night of action is a warning shot," said Olivier Lepretre, head of the regional fishing committee. "If nothing happens at the European level, we will shift up a gear". Lepretre said UK authorities had only granted licences to 22 out of the 120 boats seeking permission to fish between six and 12 nautical miles from the British coast.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY. NO. (222N)

Consignees of cargo carried on M.V CTP MAKASSAR VOY. NO. (222N) are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on 25-4-2021 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.

Phone No: 2301185

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S NEW GOLDEN SEA SHIPPING

Germany approves additional 60 bln euros to finance COVID-19 burden

GERMANY'S Bundestag, or lower house of the Parliament, passed a supplementary budget on Friday and approved an additional 60 billion euros (72 billion U.S. dollars) in debt.



FILE PHOTO: Police officers stand outside the Reichstag building, seat of Germany's lower house of parliament, in Berlin. PHOTO: AFP

The supplementary budget would provide "massive financial support for society as a whole," said Minister of Finance Olaf Scholz during his speech in the Bundestag.

According to a government statement, the additional debt would allow a record of around 240 billion euros in loans this year to finance the "enormous burdens" caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

"It is about moving forward, overcoming the pandemic," said Scholz, stressing that funds were also allocated for health protection and as state

aid for companies and employees in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the virus variants were still having a "significant impact on the economy and society," the government statement read. The additional budget is needed to create the "necessary financial framework" to counter the pandemic and its consequences. With this supplementary budget, Germany's total federal budget for 2021 now reached 547.7 billion euros, almost 50 billion euros more than originally estimated, according to the government. — Xinhua ■

Moscow to reduce Czech embassy staff in retaliatory move

MOSCOW said on Friday it would cap the number of the Czech embassy staff in a tit-for-tat move after the EU country announced it was expelling dozens of Russian diplomats.

As a result of the upcoming cuts, the Czech embassy in Moscow will lose 91 local hires, the foreign ministry said, in a move that could hamstring the operations of the EU country's diplomatic mission.

"The Czech authorities' irresponsible and provocative behaviour delivered a painful blow to their own diplomatic service," a foreign ministry spokesperson said in a statement to AFP.

Tensions have spiralled between the two countries after Prague accused Russian military intelligence of being behind a

deadly explosion at an ammunition depot in eastern Czech Republic in 2014.

Prague has expelled 18 Russian embassy staff over the incident, with Moscow kicking out 20 Czech embassy staff in retaliation.

On Thursday, Prague said it would slap a ceiling on Russian diplomat numbers in line with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, aiming at parity.

The Czech government said Russia would have until the end of May to withdraw another 63 embassy employees to reduce their numbers to the same level as those of the Czech embassy in Moscow.

The Russian foreign ministry spokesperson said that Moscow would also limit the Czech



Czech police are seen outside the Russian embassy in Prague, the Czech Republic, on April 22, 2021. The Czech Republic will reduce and put a cap on the number of employees in the Russian embassy in Prague to the same number at the Czech embassy in Moscow, the Czech Foreign Ministry said on Thursday. PHOTO:XINHUA

embassy workforce in the Russian capital, meaning that the embassies of the two countries would have seven diplomats each

by May 31. The two countries' diplomatic missions will also have 25 administrative employees and 19 local hires. —AFP ■

Sri Lanka arrests Muslim leader over Easter attacks

SRI Lanka's police Saturday arrested a top Muslim leader and member of parliament in connection with the 2019 Easter Sunday attacks that killed 279 people as pressure to speed up the investigation mounted.

Detectives took Rishad Bathiudeen, leader of the All Ceylon Makkal Party, into custody under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), police spokesman Ajith Rohana said.

He said Bathiudeen and his brother Riyaaj were arrested in pre-dawn raids on their homes in Colombo.

"They were arrested un-



Rishad Bathiudeen, leader of the All Ceylon Makkal Party, was arrested in a pre-dawn raid. PHOTO: AFP

der the PTA based on circumstantial and scientific evidence that they had connections with

the suicide bombers who carried out the attacks," Rohana said in a statement.

The arrests came three days after the head of Sri Lanka's Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Malcolm, accused the government of allowing investigations to stall.

Nearly 200 people were arrested within days of the suicide attacks on hotels and churches by local Islamist extremists, but no one has yet been charged.

Ranjith, who led commemorations on the second anniversary of the Easter attacks on Wednesday, said he was "deeply saddened" by the lack of progress in the investigation. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Immersive museum opens to promote China's aerospace popularization

AN immersive and interactive museum opened to the public recently in central China's Hubei Province to promote aerospace science popularization, ahead of China's sixth Space Day.

The opening ceremony of the museum, No. 9 Universe Space Exploration Center, was held Wednesday as a part of a space science popularization week jointly organized by China National Space Administration (CNSA) news centre and the Jingzhou municipal government.

At the opening ceremony, CNSA news centre director Meng Hua said the great cause of aerospace begins with dreams and advances based on innovation. She hoped the museum could open a door for children to explore and sow the seeds of their love for science. —AFP ■

Airfares soar, private jets in demand as rich Indians flee Covid

AIRFARES soared and demand for private jets boomed Friday as Indians who could afford it scrambled to escape a Covid surge before flights to the United Arab Emirates shut down.

All flights from the UAE to India -- one of the world's busiest air corridors -- will be suspended from Sunday as coronavirus cases in the South Asian nation reach record levels and overwhelm hospitals.

Price comparison websites showed one-way commercial flights from Mumbai to Dubai on Friday and Saturday costing as much as 80,000 rupees (\$1,000), around 10 times the usual rate.

Tickets for the New Delhi to Dubai route were going for more than 50,000 rupees, five times the normal level.

No tickets were on offer from Sunday when the 10-day flight suspension comes into force. —AFP ■

Hopes fade for Indonesia submarine crew as oxygen dwindles

HOPES of rescuing dozens aboard a missing Indonesian submarine faded Saturday as its oxygen reserves were believed to have run out, with the US and Australia joining the hunt in waters off Bali.

While warships, planes and hundreds of military personnel took part in a frantic search for the KRI Nanggala 402, authorities had said the German-built craft was equipped with enough oxygen for only three days after losing power.

But that deadline passed early Saturday with still no sign of the stricken vessel and its 53 crew. "There's been no progress yet," said Navy spokesman Julius Widjojono.



The submarine -- one of five in Indonesia's fleet -- disappeared early Wednesday during live torpedo training exercises off Bali. PHOTO:AFP

"We are still combing the area."

The submarine -- one of five in Indonesia's fleet -- disappeared early Wednesday during live torpedo training exercises off the Indonesian holiday island.

Despite hopes for a miracle, an oil spill spotted where the submarine is thought to have submerged pointed to possible fuel-tank damage, fanning fears of a deadly disaster.

"The oil spill is a bad sign,"

said retired French vice-admiral Jean-Louis Vichot.

"If it's from the submarine, then it is probably the end."

There were concerns that the submarine could have been crushed by water pressure if it sank to depths reaching 700 metres (2,300 feet) -- well below what it was built to withstand.

Few explanations

The vessel was scheduled to conduct the training exercises when it asked for permission to dive. It lost contact shortly after.

Authorities have not offered possible explanations for the submarine's sudden disappearance or commented on questions about whether the decades-old vessel was overloaded. —AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pope's envoy visits Mexican town rocked by cartel battle

POPE Francis's ambassador to Mexico on Friday visited a Mexican town terrorized by a bloody turf war between rival drug cartels, telling residents they were not forgotten.

Hundreds of faithful lined the streets of Aguillilla, a flash-point in the violence-plagued western state of Michoacan, to greet Franco Coppola, the apostolic nuncio.

"Don't forget us. We have faith in our lord," they implored the Vatican envoy, following gun battles between rival gangs who have laid siege to their community. On Monday, a suspected member of Jalisco New Generation, one of the country's most powerful cartels, attacked security forces in the town with an explosive-laden drone, wounding two police officers, the government said. —AFP ■

France launches terror probe after woman stabbed to death near Paris



French police at the crime site. PHOTO: AFP

FRENCH prosecutors opened a terror probe on Friday after a woman working for the police was stabbed to death at

a police station southwest of Paris by a Tunisian man who was then shot dead by the security forces.

The attack at the station in Rambouillet, a well-heeled usually peaceful commuter town about 60 kilometres from Paris, revived the trauma of a spate of deadly attacks last year in France blamed on Islamist radicals.

France's national anti-terrorism prosecutors said they had opened a terror investigation, also involving the DGSI domestic intelligence service, into the murder of a person holding public authority.

The attack took place in the secure entrance area of the station at around 2:20 pm (1220 GMT), a police source added, asking not to be named.

The 49-year-old woman, an administrative assistant who was returning from a lunch break, was stabbed in the throat twice and died of her wounds shortly afterwards, the source said. The attacker was fatally wounded when an officer opened fire on him. The murdered woman was the mother of two children aged 13 and 18.

Prime Minister Jean Castex, who arrived at the scene, denounced on Twitter a "barbaric act of boundless cruelty" against "a hero of daily life".

"I want to tell the police I share their emotion and their outrage," he added. —AFP ■

US ex-cop Chauvin to be sentenced June 16 for George Floyd murder

SACKED US police officer Derek Chauvin will be sentenced on June 16 for the murder of African American George Floyd in a case that sparked nationwide anti-racism protests.

The Hennepin County District Court in the Mid-western city of Minneapolis, where handcuffed Floyd died last May, said in its on-line schedule that the white ex-cop will be sentenced at 1:30 pm (1830 GMT).

The 45-year-old ex-officer -- who knelt on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes -- faces up to 40 years in prison after being found guilty of all charges Tuesday over the death of the unarmed man.

The crime was recorded by a bystander whose video shocked the world, triggering mass protests across the United States and beyond, while also prompting a national reckoning on racial injustice and police brutality. —AFP ■

Over 120 wounded in east Jerusalem clashes

OVER 100 Palestinians and 20 Israeli police were wounded in overnight clashes in annexed east Jerusalem, medics and police said Friday, as tensions mount over a police ban on gatherings and videos of attacks on youths.

The violence broke out outside one of the entrances to the walled Old City where far-right Jews had completed a march, during which participants harassed Palestinians and chanted "death to Arabs".

There have been nightly disturbances in the area since the start of Ramadan on April 13

with Palestinians complaining that police were blocking access to the promenade around the walls, a popular gathering place for Palestinians after the end of the daytime Ramadan fast.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said it had treated at least 105 people, with some 20 of them hospitalized. Israeli police said 20 officers were wounded, three of whom were taken to hospital.

They said "hundreds of rioters began disrupting the order violently including throwing stones and objects at forces" stationed near the Old City. Tensions were high in Jerusalem after a series

of videos posted in recent days showing young Arabs attacking ultra-Orthodox Jews, with Jewish

extremists taking to the street bullying Arabs in nightly confrontations. —AFP ■



Streets are set ablaze as members of the Israeli security forces deploy during clashes with Palestinian protesters outside Damascus Gate. PHOTO: AFP

Aung La to rematch De Ridder on 29 April as Bigdash out

THE Burmese Python Aung La N Sang yesterday accepted a rematch against his old rival Reinier De Ridder. According to the ONE Championship, his original competitor Vitaly Bigdash has withdrawn from the ONE Championship Light heavyweight showdown, which is scheduled to hold on 29 April in Singapore.

“Unfortunately, the Russian athlete Vitaly Bigdash tested positive for COVID-19 and has been forced to withdraw from the “ONE on TNT IV” main event tilt.

Taking his place will be the last man to beat the Myanmar sports icon – undefeated ONE Middleweight World Champion Reinier “The Dutch Knight” De Ridder.

The Burmese Python” looked sharp on the feet. However, the Dutch grappler quickly took

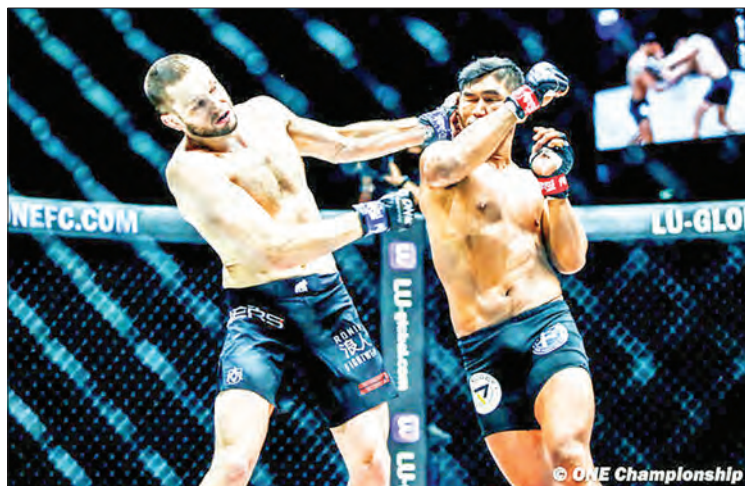
him to the canvas and ultimately submitted him in the first round,” ONE Championship officials said.

Aung La also stated on his social media ahead of the fight.

“Hello all my beloved fans, I’m now in Singapore for my Light Heavyweight Championship title defence next week. I’ll try my best to make everyone proud. May you all be peaceful,” Aung La N Sang said.

In October 2020, De Ridder challenged Aung La N Sang for his middleweight belt, and Aung La lost his middleweight champion title.

This time, Aung La N Sang got his unexpected chance to prove that he is still the legend of the Light heavyweight category of ONE Championship. —GNLM ■



Aung La N Sang (right) lands strong punches on Reinier De Ridder during their previous middleweight title clash in Singapore on 30 October 2020. **PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**

Inter’s ‘orchestra’ search for right key as Serie A title approaches



Inter were held against Napoli and Spezia but maintain a 10-point advantage as nearest rivals AC Milan lost last time out and next travel to Lazio. **PHOTO: AFP**

ANTONIO Conte compared his jittery Inter Milan team to an orchestra as they approach a first Serie A title in over a decade having endured back-to-back draws before travelling to Hellas Verona this weekend.

Inter were held against Napoli and Spezia but maintain a 10-point advantage as nearest rivals AC Milan lost last time out and next travel to Lazio.

“It’s inevitable to feel a bit of pressure,” said Conte, “especial-

ly as lots of our players are challenging for something important for the first time.” Inter won their 18th and last Serie A crown in 2010, the year they also won the Champions League under Jose Mourinho. They come up against a Hellas Verona who are stuck midtable with just one win in their last seven games. “We must live with the pressure, but we’re an orchestra that knows what to play,” said Conte.

Second-placed Milan have a difficult run to the finish line with games against Lazio, Juventus and Atalanta as they target a return to the Champions League.

Just three points separate Milan from Napoli in fifth, with sixth-placed Lazio also in the running with their postponed game against Torino still to be played. —AFP ■

Djokovic hopes COVID-19 vaccination will not be compulsory

WORLD number one Novak Djokovic said Friday he hoped it would not become compulsory for players to be vaccinated against coronavirus and insisted he won’t reveal whether he will opt for a jab. “I am still a supporter of freedom of choice,” Djokovic said after reaching the semi-finals of the ATP tournament in Belgrade. It was in the Serbian capital last summer where Djokovic, as well as a number of other players, tested positive for Covid-19 after organising a controversial exhibition event.

On whether or not he will be vaccinated to guarantee entry to tournaments, 33-year-old Djokovic refused to commit himself. “I will keep my decision

to myself, I think it’s a private, intimate thing. I do not want to be labelled as someone who is for or against vaccination”.

“I hope it does not become compulsory.” On court, Djokovic stayed on course for a third Belgrade title with a comfortable 6-1, 6-3 quarter-final win over compatriot Miomir Kecmanovic. Djokovic, the 2009 and 2011 champion at the event which is played at a venue which carries his name, will face either Russia’s Aslan Karatsev or Gianluca Mager of Italy for a place in the final.

In their first meeting, Djokovic broke his 21-year-old opponent’s first service game and repeated the feat for a 5-1 lead in the opener. —AFP ■

Smiling Tiger on crutches with cast in new photo posting

A smiling Tiger Woods appeared on crutches with a cast on his lower right leg and foot Friday in a photo posted on his Instagram account.

The image was the first of Woods since he suffered serious right leg injuries in a one-car crash February 23 near Los Angeles.

Two months later, the 15-time major winner appeared alongside his dog in the image, taken in his home practice facility in Jupiter, Florida.

Woods said that work was progressing faster upon his three-hole backyard practice course than he was progressing in his recovery.

“My course is coming along faster than I am,” Woods wrote. “But it’s nice to have a faithful rehab partner, man’s best friend.”

Woods, 45, has won 82 US PGA Tour titles, level with Sam Snead for the all-time record.

Before Woods was injured in the crash, he was

working to overcome a back operation in time to play at the Masters earlier this month. Woods has released no timetable regarding how extensive his injuries are or when he might walk normally again, much less return to his golfing career.

Police found Woods was driving nearly twice the legal speed limit when his SUV went out of control and rolled several times before stopping.

Woods was hospitalized for weeks before returning home to Florida last month.

He underwent hours of surgery to repair a shattered lower right leg and ankle, including the insertion of a rod into his tibia and screws and pins being used to stabilize his ankle.

Woods had undergone a series of back operations before making a fairytale comeback that saw him win the 2019 Masters for his first major title since the 2008 US Open at Torrey Pines. —AFP ■



Tiger Woods posted a photo of himself on crutches on his Instagram account on Friday, the first image of him since he suffered serious right leg injuries in a one-car crash two months ago. **PHOTO: AFP**