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

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 Secretary 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 Rachman of Indonesia, Ambassador of Myanmar to Indonesia 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 Hassanal Bolkiah, the secretary-general of ASEAN, ministers of ASEAN, and senior officials attended the meeting.
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 131 rice bags and 69 pyi 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 dresses. Then, Rakhine State Administration Council and Tatmadaw (Army, Navy, Air) also donated K9 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

Daily Newspapers available online

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.

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

FROM PAGE-1

Myanmar keeps close cooperation with ASEAN member ...
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-Tachileik 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$106 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 $149 million and its import of $38.8 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 borders 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 borders,” U Min Thein clarified.

On 29 March, a Myanmar national was found to be COVID-19 positive in the Kyunaw 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, Lwelye in Kachin State, Chin Shwehaw in northeastern Shan State, Kampahtl 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$3.35 million compared with the last year’s figures of $3.15 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 fire 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, the Ministry of Commerce’s data showed. — NN
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village-tract</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 12 polling stations in Sumprabum township of Kachin State</td>
<td>2,786</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 54 polling stations in Shwegu township of Kachin State</td>
<td>65,688</td>
<td>103,839</td>
<td>71,233</td>
<td>32,606</td>
<td>32,537</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 69 polling stations in Bhamo township of Kachin State</td>
<td>94,244</td>
<td>181,528</td>
<td>126,363</td>
<td>55,245</td>
<td>55,122</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of 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 55,245 ballots instead of 55,245 ballots. The difference was 201 ballots and it found 144 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village-tract</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Ward/village-tract ballots</td>
<td>3,100</td>
<td>2,449</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Township Remaining ballots</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Total polling station</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 2,471 ballots. It left 679 ballots while the exact remaining ballot is 679. Findings were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village-tract</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 6 Wasatkha Ward</td>
<td>1 200</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Interpaing Village-tract</td>
<td>1 150</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Zanakka Village-tract</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 Minehaung Village-tract</td>
<td>1 150</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5 Khinlajin Village-tract</td>
<td>1 150</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6 Kwarpan Village-tract</td>
<td>1 150</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 Bwutkha Village-tract</td>
<td>1 250</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8 Ward/village-tract ballots</td>
<td>12 3,100</td>
<td>2,449</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9 Township Remaining ballots</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10 Total polling station</td>
<td>12 3,150</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 and remaining ballots of Sumprabum Township.

8. Findings were as follows:

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village-tract</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Ward/village-tract ballots</td>
<td>67,000</td>
<td>52,338</td>
<td>14,662</td>
<td>14,662</td>
<td>14,662</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 Township Remaining ballots</td>
<td>7,539</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>7,298</td>
<td>7,298</td>
<td>7,298</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Total polling station</td>
<td>74,539</td>
<td>52,579</td>
<td>21,960</td>
<td>21,960</td>
<td>21,960</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election in each township

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village-tract</th>
<th>Total polling station</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
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<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 Ward/village-tract ballots</td>
<td>3,100</td>
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<td>651</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2 Township Remaining ballots</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3 Total polling station</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,471</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. It found only 21,906 remaining ballots instead of 21,960 and so 85 ballots were missing and there were 7 extra ballots.

11. Findings were as follows:
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 32,357 ballots instead of 32,606. The extra/shortage ballots and illegal extra ballots were found at respective poll stations. Findings were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ward/village -tract ballots</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103,839</td>
<td>71,233</td>
<td>32,606</td>
<td>32,537</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14. Findings were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Ward/village -tract</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
<th>Used</th>
<th>Exact remaining</th>
<th>Remaining on the Ground</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Thyasi Ward</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>1,472</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Myama Ward</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mingon Ward</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>855</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Minkyaukong Ward</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,010</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nyaungpin Ward</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Naungkho Ward</td>
<td>2,750</td>
<td>2,216</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thabyathla Ward</td>
<td>1,350</td>
<td>1,084</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kyaukkyi Ward</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>2,288</td>
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<td>712</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Muang Ward</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,342</td>
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<td>555</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Tharraw Ward</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Thayetkone Ward</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,571</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>327</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Thawpin Ward</td>
<td>2,150</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>389</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Teinthoa Ward</td>
<td>1,900</td>
<td>1,349</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Simunoye Ward</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1,670</td>
<td>430</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Shweoochaukong Ward</td>
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<td>1,136</td>
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<td>214</td>
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</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td>Yatlay Ward</td>
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<td>1,868</td>
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<td>336</td>
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</tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Shweboontha Ward</td>
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<td>389</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Thawpinone Ward</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Tenihaone Ward</td>
<td>3,150</td>
<td>2,173</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. It found only 32,357 remaining ballots instead of 32,606 and so 116 ballots were missing and there were 47 extra ballots.

14. Findings were as follows:

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Account name</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Section of Penal Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>DAUNG (aka) Thura Aung</td>
<td>Yankin Township, Yangon Region (Temporary resident in Thailand)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>May Myat Noe</td>
<td>Dawbon Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Kayan Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Phone Sett Thwin</td>
<td>Mingalar Taungnyunt Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Min Thway Hlan</td>
<td>Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Thet Htar Susan</td>
<td>Dagon Myothit Township (North), Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sein Duwar</td>
<td>Chaungmyathazi Township, Mandalay Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Melvin Moe (aka) Ko Moe</td>
<td>Temporary resident in Singapore</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Sithu Aung Myint</td>
<td>Pazundaung Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>El Thinazar Maung</td>
<td>Pabedan Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kaung Myat Thu</td>
<td>Chaung U Township, Sagaing Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kyaw Naing Oo (Rahta)</td>
<td>Hlin Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Oo Aung Chan Nyein(Koe)</td>
<td>Mawlamyine Township, Mon State</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Ye Min Kyi</td>
<td>Myawady Township, Kayin State</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Thant Zin Aung</td>
<td>Myawady Township, Kayin State</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Neonatal Chef</td>
<td>Mingaladon Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Shwe Pon</td>
<td>Bago Township, Bago Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yoon Thi Ri Shwe Sin</td>
<td>Toungoo Township, Bago Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action will be taken against those who admit the offenders, and list of remaining offenders will be released. —MNA
Tripartite responsibilities for an increase of export volume, a decrease of commodity prices

In fact, the government, the businesspersons and the consumers are responsible for increasing export volume of the State and decreasing prices of commodities depending on rationality in all aspects.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Hospital</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Section of Penal Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Dr El El Ko (Specialist)</td>
<td>Kengtung People's Hospital</td>
<td>Kengtung Town, Shan State (East)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dr Tin Tun Oo (Specialist)</td>
<td>Kengtung People's Hospital</td>
<td>Kengtung Town, Shan State (East)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dr Than Tun Win (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Pyinmana People's Hospital</td>
<td>Pyinmana Town, Nay Pyi Taw</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dr Moe Pwint Aung (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Pyinmana People's Hospital</td>
<td>Morywa Town, Sagaing Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dr Khin Yadana Soe (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Pyinmana People's Hospital</td>
<td>Pyinmana Town, Pyinmana People's Hospital compound</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dr Khin Khin Thant (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Lwee People's Hospital</td>
<td>Morywa Town, Sagaing Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Dr Hsu Mon Aung (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Lwee People's Hospital</td>
<td>Kyauk-padaung Town, Mandalay Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Dr Aung Min (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Paunglaung Station Hospital</td>
<td>Zeyathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dr Sai Han Khay Hlaing (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Ottarathiri Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Dobbathiri Township, Nay Pyi Taw</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dr Zaw Pyae Paing (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Ottarathiri Orthopaedic Specialist Hospital</td>
<td>Selenhain Township, Mandalay Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dr Aye Thanda Kyi (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Ottarathiri Eye, Ear, Nose and Throat Hospital</td>
<td>Hinthada Town, Ayeyawady Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Dr Kyaw Min Tin (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Mawlamyine-yun People's Hospital</td>
<td>Mawlamyine-yun Town, Ayeyawady Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dr Ye Myint Kyaw (Specialist)</td>
<td>Yangon Children's Hospital</td>
<td>Yangon Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Dr Zin Min Min Lat (Head of Township Public Health Department)</td>
<td>Batabaung Township, Township Public Healthcare Department</td>
<td>Sangyoung Township, Yangon Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dr Chaw Chaw Win (Specialist)</td>
<td>North Okkalapa People's Hospital</td>
<td>North Okkalapa Township, Yangon Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dr Thida Soe (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Loikaw People's Hospital</td>
<td>Loikaw Town, Kayah State</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Dr Khine Zin Win (Specialist)</td>
<td>Namhkam People's Hospital</td>
<td>Namhkam Town, Shan State (North)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dr Nyl Mann (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Tangyan People’s Hospital</td>
<td>Tangyan Town, Shan State (North)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Dr Kyaw Thu Win (Assistant Surgeon)</td>
<td>Namhkam People's Hospital</td>
<td>Namhkam Town, Shan State (North)</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Dr Su Su Win (Specialist)</td>
<td>Monywa People's Hospital</td>
<td>Monywa Town, Sagaing Region</td>
<td>505-a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Nyl 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 continue providing healthcare services to civilians

Police seized weapons used in riots
Most major companies failing climate targets - study

Oil companies, major producers of greenhouse gas emissions, are targeted by climate litigants 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 Thursday.

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 (60 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 (3.6 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 2055 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 and a source close to Winterkorn told AFP on Friday that the former head of its Audi division, for “breach of duty” in connection with the “dieselgate” scandal.

Today.

French authorities have launched a probe against Martin Winterkorn over the “dieselgate” scandal.

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


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
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 busiest 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 economy 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 ready pessimistic enough to forecast contraction in the world’s third-largest economy.—Kyodo News

French fishermen prepare to block UK trucks in Brexit protest

MORE than a hundred French fishermen were rethunding 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 British waters to 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

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 volumes 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

Pandemic pushes UK state borrowing to peacetime record

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-19. 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

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 euro) in the year to March, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The group said that from January to March of this year, diesel volumes 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

Finance Minister Rishi Sunak, also chancellor of the exchequer, said the rise in borrowing was “a significant step up from the previous year,” adding that while the increase was expected, “we remain on track to return to deficit in 2021-22.”

He also said the government would release figures on corporation tax receipts later this month. PHOTO: PA

The ONS preferred measure of the state’s fiscal deficit – the public sector net borrowing plus debt interest – the state’s “true” fiscal deficit – also increased to £303.2bn, or 15.2% of GDP, from £248.5bn and 10.9% of GDP in the previous year.

The ONS said public sector net output borrowing, the state’s “true” fiscal deficit, increased to £303.2bn, or 15.2% of GDP, from £248.5bn and 10.9% of GDP in the previous year.

Gross domestic product – the UK’s total economic output – fell 1% in the first quarter of the year, the ONS said, warning the economic downturn was expected to continue through the second quarter due to the impact of the pandemic.

“Huge drops in hotel and restaurant sales were recorded in March, and indicators for the three months to March show a fall in economic activity in all three sectors,” the ONS said. “The sharp decline in tourist-related activity was the result of the UK government’s advice to avoid non-essential travel and holiday accommodation and the reintroduction of the additional restrictions in the south east.”

The ONS statistics said in a statement.
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.

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 our 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.

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Czech police are seen outside the Russian embassy in Prague, the Czech Republic, on Monday. (Photo: Xinhua)

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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 297 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 Riyaj were arrested in pre-dawn raids on their homes in Colombo.

“They were arrested uner 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 Lan- ka’s Roman Catholic Church, Cardinal Malcolm, accused the government of allowing investiga- tions to stall.

Nearly 200 people were arrested within days of the suicide attacks on hotels and churches by local Islamist extrem- ists, but no one has yet been charged. Ranjith, who led commemo- rations on the second anniversary of the Easter at- tacks on Wednesday, said he was “deeply saddened” by the lack of progress in the investigation. — AFP

Immersive museum opens to promote China’s aerospace populazation

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 Admin- istration (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

PHOTO: AFP

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PHOTO: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 Wijayanto.

On Wednesday during live torpedo training exercises off Bali, the submarine -- one of five in Indonesia’s fleet -- disappeared early Wednesday during live torpedoes s 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.

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

France launches terror probe after woman stabbed to death near Paris

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 49-year-old woman, an administrative assistant who was returning from a lunch break, was stabbe 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

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 165 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 streets bullying Arabs in nightly confrontations. —AFP

French police at the crime site. PHOTO: AFP

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 2:30 pm (1230 GMT), a police source added, asking not to be named.

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 trial 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

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

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 Aguililla, a flashpoint in the violence-plagued western state of Michoacan, to greet Francisco Coppola, the apostolic nuncio.

“I don’t forget. We have faith in our lord,” they implored the Vatican envoy, following gun battles between rival gangs who have laid siege to their town since 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

US ex-cop Chauvin will 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 western city of Minneapolis, where handcuffed Floyd died last May, said in its online 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 case 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

SOCIETY

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**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 Reineri De Ridder. According to the ONE Championship, its 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 Reineri “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

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

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. 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, “especially 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”, Djokovic said.

“I hope it does not become compulsory.” On court, Djokovic stationed 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 Woods 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 was 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

**PHOTO: ONE CHAMPIONSHIP**