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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Announcement of Union Election Commission

6 June 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 in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region.

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People take relaxation at Hseeintan Beach during office holidays

HSEEINTAN beach in Kanyingon Village-tract of Kungyangon Township, Yangon Region, is crowded with the people taking relaxation during the office holidays.

"Tidal water has reached the beach since at about 9 am, so travellers enjoy swimming from the morning to the afternoon. At about 3 pm, number of swimmers declines. Most of the travellers return home without spending their time till the darkness. Tidal water slightly ebbs but it is ready to admit swimming till the evening. Travellers come from Dala and Kungyangon townships as well as those from Yangon. Food stalls don't have high demand on sales now," said a local who opens restaurant on the beach.

Hseeintan beach can be seen with young and old travellers in Kanyingon Village-tract of Kungyangon Township, Yangon Region.
PHOTO: SOE MYINT AUNG

Children from flocks of travellers happily enjoy riding of horses, speedboats and four-wheel motorcycles at Hseeintan beach. Meanwhile, adults from the flocks pose for documentary photos together with statues of mermaids near the beach. Moreover, visitors wait for the sunset to take photos with the beautiful scenes of the beach in the background.

Travellers from four corners of the country pay visits to the beach not only during the office holidays but weekdays. So, the beach is thronged with the visitors. Hence, more than 50 restaurants and food stalls are opened on the beach to give food services to the travellers. Among them, hilsa curry, crab and shrimp meals are very famous among the visitors.

The beach which has been famous since early 2017 is located close to Yangon City with attraction to travellers from Yangon and its environs.—Pwint Thitsa/GNLM

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar
State Administration Council
Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

(a) To build a Union based on democracy and federalism, through a disciplined and genuine multiparty democratic system that is fair and just.

(b) To emphasize the achievement of enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA).

(c) To continue implementing the principle of peaceful co-existence among countries through an independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

(a) To enhance production based on agriculture and livestock through modern techniques and strengthen all-round development in other sectors of the economy.

(b) To develop a stable market economy and promote international investment in order to enhance the economic development of the entire National people.

(c) To promote and support local businesses to create employment opportunities and increase domestic production.

3. Social affairs

(a) To ensure a strong and dynamic Union spirit, the genuine spirit of patriotism.

(b) To respect and promote the customs and traditions of all National peoples and preserve and safeguard their cultural heritage and national characteristics.

(c) To enhance the health, fitness and education quality of the entire nation.

Five-Point Road Map of the State Administration Council

1. The Union Election Commission will be reconstituted and its mandated tasks, including the scrutiny of voter lists, shall be implemented in accordance with the law.
2. Effective measures will be taken with added momentum to prevent and manage the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Actions will be taken to ensure the speedy recovery of businesses from the impact of COVID-19.
4. Emphasis will be placed on achieving enduring peace for the entire nation in line with the agreements set out in the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement.
5. Upon accomplishing the provisions of the state of emergency, free and fair multiparty democratic elections will be held in line with the 2008 Constitution, and further work will be undertaken to hand over State duties to the winning party in accordance with democratic standards.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar
Anti-Terrorism Central Committee
Declaration of Terrorist Groups
Notification No 2/2021

12th Waning of Tagu 1383 ME
8 May 2021

The Anti-Terrorism Central Committee has issued this order with the approval of the State Administration Council in exercising sub-section (e) of Section 6 and sub-section (b) of Section 72 of the Anti-Terrorism Law.

1. Unlawful Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH and National Unity Government-NUG formed by CRPH constantly incited Civil Disobedience Movement-CDM participants to commit violent acts. Many riots occurred in many places of the country due to their incitements. They perpetrated bombing, arson, manslaughter, and intimidation to disrupt the state administrative machinery due to the influence of the leaders of CRPH and NUG. Moreover, NUG established People Defence Force-PDF. Violent acts occurred in the name of regional defence forces instigated by NUG and PDF. It is found that their acts to join CDM, threatening non-CDMs, inciting students and teachers not to go to schools, supporting terrorist acts and perpetrating such terrorist acts violate Section 3 (b) and Sub-section 13 of the Counter-Terrorism Law – acts with the intent to cause fear in public, to force Government or any internal and external organization to do an illegitimate act or to refrain from doing a lawful act, and other acts, stipulated by the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No 23 on 4 June 2014.
2. Therefore, unlawful associations – Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw-CRPH, National Unity Government-NUG, People Defence Force-PDF and all their subordinates have been declared as terrorist groups.

Chairman
Anti-Terrorism Central Committee

Tatmadaw values democracy

THE Union ministers need to explain voting frauds and the situation of voter lists in the 2020 general election to the service personnel. All State service personnel need to understand the political crises based on the dishonesty of democracy in the previous general election, although the Tatmadaw values democracy.

(Excerpt from the speech to the Management Committee meeting made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 21 May 2021)

Union Minister for Foreign Affairs leaves for Chongqing, PRC to attend Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings

THE Myanmar delegation led by Union Minister for Foreign Affairs U Wunna Maung Lwin left Nay Pyi Taw on a special flight yesterday for Chongqing, China, to attend the Special ASEAN-China Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings to be held from 6 to 9 June 2021. —MNA

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations inspects investment of manufacturing fire proof bricks

Union ministers view use of machinery in manufacturing of high quality fire proof bricks at the plant in Danyingon of Insein Township, Yangon Region.

U Aung Naing Oo, Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, Vice-Chairman of Myanmar Investment Commission, and U Shwe Lay, Union Minister for Construction, and U Hla Soe, Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council accompanied by departmental officials inspected the investment of manufacturing autoclaved aerated concrete blocks, autoclaved pressed concrete blocks and high quality fire proof blocks in Danyingon of Insein Township in Yangon Region, yesterday morning.

The team led by Union Ministers and Chairman of the Yangon Region Administration Council took a tour around and inspected the operation of the industry.

Then, on behalf of the industry, Managing Director, U Soe Yee, explained facts about the operational conditions, operational challenges and investment issues at the meeting room of the industry. The Union Ministers and the Chairman of Yangon Region Administration Council discussed and noted to increase productivity and availability of market, to focus on the environmental conservation and to be able to use more products of the industry in construction sites and projects.

The industry manufactures 315 million autoclaved aerated concrete blocks, autoclaved pressed concrete blocks and high quality fire proof blocks per year.

The production of these import-substitute high technology concrete bricks as a substitution of soil bricks can help environmental conservation by improving the flow of water along the river since the use of river sand in manufacturing processes, reducing the impact on soil quality and the release of carbon dioxide, preventing the loss of cultivated land and deforestation. —MNA

Union Minister for NREC meets Ayeyawady Region Administration Council Chairman, members

UNION Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation U Khin Maung Yi held a discussion with Ayeyawady Region Administration Council Chairman, council members and departmental officials in Ayeyawady Region yesterday.

The Union Minister and officials discussed 2021 monsoon tree-planting programmes, firewood plantation, mangrove forest conservation and plantation, national-level waste management programmes and other cooperation work between the ministry and the region administration council.

During the meeting, the Union Minister highlighted the forest coverage areas in Ayeyawady Region in previous years, climate changes, biodiversity losses and damage to ecosystem due to deforestation.

He then said it should reduce the natural resources exploration rate and establish firewood forest, conserve mangrove in coastal regions as a national duty in accordance with the instructions of State Administration Council Chairman.

Union Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental conservation U Khin Maung Yi meets Ayeyawady Region Administration council members and departmental officials.

Then, the region administration council chairman and officials of relevant departments clarified land area for firewood plantation, tree-planting programmes and other work plans.

The Union Minister and party inspected the Thalatkhwa forest reserve in Pathein Township and commercial plantation of ironwood tree for 2021 monsoon. — MNA

Three terrorists arrested together with grenade, WY stimulant tablets

THE police arrested three suspects who threw stones and used obscene language by riding motorcycles to Shwenyaung security outfit of Shan State at night of 5 June.

These three men committed such moves and ran away. Then, the security members chased them who threatened with the use of a bomb at Shwenyaung-Yaksawk junction. So, the security members opened fire to them.

The suspects Than Zaw Aung and Thein Naing died on the spot and Khine Zaw Win was arrested alive together with one MG-36 grenade and 40 WY brand stimulant tablets.

The two deaths were taken to the local military hospital and Khine Zaw Win was transferred to the authorities together with the grenade and WY tablets.— MNA

Exaggeration of media on attack in Ayeyawady Region

THE terrorists attacked the security members in Kyonpyaw Township of Ayayawady Region. It left one security member injured and three people dead, and two were arrested together with the homemade guns.

Some of the media outlets including DVB expressed the case on Facebook by covering the true case. They stated the news like a teacher sent information to the officials and it caused civilian casualties unnecessarily. Such news expression may threaten the life of teacher, incite enmity between the local populace and teacher, and cause misunderstanding over the duties of security members.

On 5 June, the combined team comprising security members conducted a surprise check in Hlayswe Village of Zayityoe Village-tract of Kyonpyaw Township as they received information that the insurgents made homemade guns and explosives. But they found nothing and came back. Meanwhile, about 30 terrorists attacked them with homemade guns. The clash between security members and terrorists took about 20 minutes. Then, the terrorists retreated. Three terrorists found dead and two were arrested with their firearms. One of the security members was injured.

Therefore, the people should consider the news spreading on Facebook pages whether they are true.— MNA

Information released missionary monk killed by terrorists expressed on Facebook

SAYADAW Ashin Pannajota, aged 52 and 16 vasa, a Chin hilly area missionary, has been living alone in Twideng Village on Mindat-Matupi road by building a monastery for about two years.

The Sayadaw left for Mindat by Nissan Note (the number plate under scrutiny) on 4 June to sit for Phahtamalat written test to be held in Haka on 7 June. Then, Sayadaw was found dead on 5 June as the armed insurgents killed him and set on fire to the vehicle at about 27 miles from Mindat.

The officials conduct investigation to reveal the case as the armed groups brutally killed the innocent civilians including members of the Sangha, according to the Myanmar Police Force.— MNA

64 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 6 June, total figure rises to 144,317

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **144,317 after 64 new cases** were reported on 6 June 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **132,452** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **3,225** after two died. — MNA

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Due to limitation of space we are only able to publish **"Letter to the Editor"** that do not exceed 500 words. Should you submit a text longer than 500 words please be aware that your letter will be edited.

Myanmar rice export earns $386 mln in five months

MYANMAR has generated US$386 million income from exports of rice and broken rice in the first-five months (Oct-Feb) of the current financial year 2020-2021, according to Myanmar Customs Department.

At present, rice shipment to European countries is declining. However, Myanmar is constantly delivering rice and broken rice to China and Bangladesh. The market cools down for now due to the transport difficulties and dollar gains. The price is quite stable with the sluggish trade.

Freigh workers are loading bags of rice on cargo truck.

Next, China's Customs granted licences to 47 Myanmar companies on 26 February 2021 to legally export the rice to China through Muse land border this year. The authorized companies for rice export to China increased this year as against last year. However, the permitted volume of rice for exports has not been confirmed yet, said U Min Thein, vice chair of Muse Rice Wholesale Centre.

Myanmar traders are sending rice to China through Muse border under new permits at the present time.

Nevertheless, limited money withdrawal permitted by the private banks is disrupting the rice exports.

Myanmar set the rice export target at only 2 million tonnes in the current FY as summer paddy growing acreage drops, said U Ye Min Aung, President of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Weather changes affected irrigation water resource availability on agriculture. Consequently, the export figures showed a drop of 300,000 tonnes of rice in exports this year.

Myanmar generated over $800 million from rice exports in the previous FY2019-2020 which ends 30 September, with estimated volume of over 2.5 million tonnes. — KH/GNLM

Soybean price rises on steady demand

Soybean plantations thriving in patches.

THE strong demand from border markets hikes up soybean price to K80,100 per 60-viss bag (a viss equals to 1.6 kg).

The soybean stood only at K68,550 per bag in January-end. The high foreign demand drove the price up to above K80,000 per bag in early June.

Normally, Myanmar sends soybeans to China through Muse border post. In addition to Chinese market, Myanmar's soybeans are also sold out to Thailand to a small extent. It is also shipped to India through maritime trade. Soybeans are used for oil, animal feed and other non-food industrial products.

The biggest challenge of Myanmar's soybean production was the decline in number of soybean sawn acreage in the previous years. Between 2013-2014FY-2018-2019FY, over 40,000 acres of soybean farms dropped. Quality seeds play a pivotal role in soybean production, extraction of oil from soybean and value-added production.

Myanmar's soybean sector needs technical support for pre-harvest diseases and post-harvest losses, along with market exploration.

The growers turn to soybean due to the market potentials. There are over 360,000 acres of soybean in Myanmar in the 2019-2020 financial year, which is up from over 340,000 acres registered in the 2018-2019 FY.

Myanmar's soybean export is remarkably increasing year over year. The country exported over 1,700 tonnes of soybean in 2016, 2,000 tonnes in 2017, over 7,000 tonnes in 2018-2019 Fiscal Year. —KK/GNLM

Green gram prices remain bullish as foreign demand surges

THE prices of green gram remain high on the back of the high foreign demand, traders said.

At present, the regular inflow of green gram is seen in the domestic market. The green gram is currently demanded by India, European Union and China. Additionally, some traders are purchasing the green gram to be exported to Thailand and Viet Nam as well.

During the first week of May, green gram price stood at K101,000 per three-basket bag. It rose to around K118,000 per bag in the May-end.

The green gram (Kayan Shwewah strain) were priced around K115,000 per bag in the first week of June.

China accounts for 60 per cent of Myanmar's green gram exports. In addition, countries in the European Union also purchase green gram from Myanmar.

The export volume of green gram to India is lower compared to other countries. China prefers green gram Shwewah strain, said an official from the Commerce Ministry.

China makes value-added products of green gram and sends them to foreign markets. Moreover, China produces bean by-products as feedstuffs.

The country has generated $172 million revenue from green gram exports in the five-month period (Oct-Feb) of the current financial year 2020-2021.

Myanmar's green gram exports were registered at over 330,000 tonnes in the 2015-2016 fiscal year, over 400,000 tonnes in the 2016-2017FY, and over 350,000 tonnes in the 2017-2018FY and over 300,000 tonnes in the 2018-2019FY. Green gram is mostly exported to China through the border trade channels.

Of the total pulses' exports, green gram accounted for more than 26 per cent of the exports in the previous years.

As per green gram plantation data, there are over 300,000 acres of plantations in the country.

Green gram is primarily grown in Sagaing, Magway, Mandalay, Yangon, Bago, and Ayeyawady regions and Mon and Kayin states. — KK/GNLM

Farming workers are plucking green gram in the farm.

Announcement of Union Election Commission

FROM PAGE-1

2. There were 1,191,890 eligible voters in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region and of them, 792,725 voters cast their votes that showed 66.51 per cent. The following 13 parties' candidates and independent candidates ran in 2020 multiparty general election.

(a) National League for Democracy
(b) Union Solidarity and Development Party
(c) Mon Unity Party
(d) Union Betterment Party
(e) Union Labour-Farmer Force Party
(f) National Democratic Force
(g) National Unity Party
(h) Kayin People's Party
(i) People's Pioneer Party
(j) Democratic Party (Myanmar)
(k) Dawei Nationalities Party
(l) United Nationalities Democracy Party
(m) People's Party
(n) Independent

3. The Union Election Commission has conducted inspection together with the respective township election sub-commissions, head of police force, heads of township immigration and population departments, township administrators and representatives of parties under Section 53 of the Hluttaw Election Law.

4. According to the inspection, the previous election commission released 1,191,890 eligible voters in these 10 townships of Taninthayi Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 778,506 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 193,991citizens, associate citizens, naturalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 8,120 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times, and 112,756 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.

5. According to the inspection, a total of 1,205 polling stations took out 1,299,972 ballots and used 787,976. It left 495,219 ballots instead of 511,996. The difference was 24,098 ballots, and it found 7,321 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective polling stations.

6. Findings on voter lists and ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in respective townships were as follows:

Findings on voter lists in each township

Sr	Township	Numbers of polling stations	Township sub-commission	List from immigration department	Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards	Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC	Those involved in voter list more than two times holding one CSC
1	Myeik	227	226,798	143,563	38,519	1,548	21,276
2	Dawei	104	134,723	86,729	15,638	1,127	14,460
3	Taninthayi	97	82,313	49,027	16,585	532	7,756
4	Kawthoung	75	112,589	67,416	24,679	202	6,040
5	Bokpyin	114	59,099	31,412	16,900	181	3,304
6	Kyunsu	163	114,161	88,045	25,470	727	9,828
7	Launglon	112	127,574	79,827	12,536	1,088	14,778
8	Thayetchaung	110	106,436	78,727	11,693	664	10,894
9	Palaw	89	114,023	76,772	16,862	1,325	13,104
10	Yebyu	114	114,174	76,988	15,109	726	11,316
	Total	1,205	1,191,890	778,506	193,991	8,120	112,756

Findings on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw election in each township

Sr	Township	Total polling station	Withdrawal	Used	Exact remaining	Remaining on the Ground	Different	
							Missing	Extra
1	Myeik	227	241,272	156,778	84,494	82,712	1,869	87
2	Dawei	104	141,551	85,188	56,363	53,325	7,438	4,400
3	Taninthayi	97	95,707	60,353	35,354	31,599	3,825	70
4	Kawthoung	75	118,761	64,546	54,215	52,760	1,493	38
5	Bokpyin	114	66,582	42,272	24,310	23,618	1,080	388
6	Kyunsu	163	124,627	87,816	36,811	35,874	993	56
7	Launglon	112	140,813	77,052	63,761	62,725	2,592	1,556
8	Thayetchaung	110	118,522	66,041	52,481	50,204	2,641	364
9	Palaw	89	125,519	76,988	48,531	47,776	807	52
10	Yebyu	114	126,618	70,942	55,676	54,626	1,360	310
	Total	1,205	1,299,972	787,976	511,996	495,219	24,098	7,321

7. Findings in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region were as follows;

(a) According to Section 6 (a) of Hluttaw Election Law, citizen, associate citizen, naturalized citizen or holder of temporary certificate who has completed the age of 18 years on the day of commencement of election and who does not contravene the provisions of this Law. There are 193,991 non-identity voters. There were 8,120 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 112,756 persons repeated on the voter lists two times in these ten townships of Taninthayi Region.

(b) A total of 1,205 polling stations withdrew 1299,972 ballots and used 787,976 ballots. It left 495,219 ballots instead of 511,996. The difference was 24,098, and the extra ballot was 7,321. The missing/ extra ballots were found at some polling stations. The exact numbers of ballots were granted to the polling stations, and such extra, and missing ballots were found due to illegal activities.

(c) There were 792,725 people who cast votes for Pyithu Hluttaw in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region in the 8 November election. They used 787,976 ballots, and 4,749 ballots were lesser than the numbers.

(d) Of 792,725 voters in 10 townships of Taninthayi Region, 624,646 people cast votes at the polling stations, while there were 168,079 advance voters. The percentage for casting votes at the polling station was 78.8 per cent and 21.2 per cent for the advance votes.

(e) In voter Form (1), the voters were allowed to cast votes without their ID card number, date of birth and parents' names.

(f) The additional voter lists were not submitted to township election sub-commission and were allowed to cast vote by registering with handwriting in Form (1).

(g) The bags of polling station containing ballots, ballot receipts and Form (1) books were found missing and could not be examined.

(h) It did not found the names of voters, voting numbers, polling station numbers, Ward/village-tracts, signatures of voters on the ballot receipts used at some polling stations.

(i) The ward/village-tract election sub-commission failed to return the advance ballots and remaining ballots to the officials in accordance with the Law.

(j) The non-identity voters were found in the voter lists, and they were allowed to cast vote just with voter certificates without ID cards.

(k) They took measures violating the Law when they started collecting advance ballot.

(l) They released the COVID-19 related instructions, which were not in conformity with the Law, to collect voter lists and advance votes when the election drew near.

8. The frauds committed in 8 November election were found as follows:

(a) The ward/village-tract administrators served as chairpersons in collecting the numbers of the population to compile the voter lists. In this process, the ward/village-tract administrators appointed by the NLD government and some NLD members jointly collected the numbers of the population. They did not inspect whether the people live in their ward/village-tracts and whether they are eligible voters in accordance with Hluttaw Election Law. Therefore, there were many non-identity voters on the voter lists and some repeated on the voter lists two times or over three times with just one NRC card. Section (15) (c) of the Hluttaw Election Law, Chapter VI mentioned, "Preparation of Voting Roll", and stated, "Whoever has the right to vote in any constituency shall not be included in the voting roll of any constituency other than that of the constituency concerned at the same time." And it found activities that violate the Law. According to Section 19 (b), the names not eligible are included in the voting roll; delete such names from the voting roll. But they did not remove the names.

(b) The former UEC also released instructions that the advance voting process for people over 60 can be conducted starting 29-10-2020 before the election day. But some NLD members conducted door-to-door service in collecting advance votes in some places, and it caused voting frauds. According to COVID-19 health rules, the announcement and instruction for voters who were unable to return to their constituencies were released on 8-10-2020 and 11-10-2020, respectively, by the former UEC. Due to such directives, the voters were found repeated on the voter lists, and non-identity voters were also on the lists and were allowed to cast votes.

(c) The former UEC also released a statement for voters without any ID cards to cast their vote on 19-8-2020. The non-identity voters cast votes with voter certificates at the polling stations. Therefore, the non-identity voters, those who repeated on voter lists for two times or over three times, were allowed to cast votes without complying with the Section 59 of the Hluttaw Election Law. Regarding the voting stamps, the instruction that the ballots with a tick without a UEC label will be recognized as valid votes also caused a complicated situation in counting the votes.

(d) The former Taninthayi Region government and NLD party put pressure in forming election sub-commission (especially for ward/village level) to include their NLD supporters. They also allowed the additional voters to cast vote by just registering with handwriting in Form (1) for advance voting processes or on election day. They also put pressure on election officials and voters by showing their power of party members at ward/village-tract while the people over 60 cast their advance vote. They committed illegal activities as they put their party logos made of paper in the masks while they were distributed to the voters in order to vote for them in the polling station. During election campaign, they did not follow the instructions and conducted campaign by using the word party's supporter up to the day for advance vote. During the period for advance vote, the Hluttaw candidate, Region Hluttaw Deputy Speaker misused the power to give order to their party members to check the voting processes in the ward/village commission office. They arrange to cast vote again due to the wrong ballots for advance vote by violating the law. Therefore, they interfere in voting processes and committed illegal activities.

9. The voting frauds were supposed to be intentionally committed. Moreover, they also interfere in collecting voter lists, election campaign, advance voting process and voting processes even on election day with their power. Then, the former UEC also misused their authorities and violated the Law and rules.

10. Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the officials inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes in ten townships of Taninthayi Region. The NLD party misused the COVID-19 restrictions and State Power in election processes, including election campaigns of rival parties and Hluttaw MPs, to win the election and form a government. The party also arranged to seize power in advance. According to the above analysis, it was found that the election was not in conformity with the relevant Hluttaw Election laws/rules, so the election was not free and fair.

Union Election Commission

Myanmar's traditionally domestic industries seen with development in rural area till today

TRADITIONALLY domestic industries scattered across the nation in the reign of Myanmar kings. Traditional looms were seen at all the houses. People from all villages were engaged in operations to produce baskets, mats, pots, blacksmith and goldsmith industries for their livelihoods.

Although traditional productions were gradually substituted with machinery in major cities, the traditional productions are still flourishing in rural area.

Some traditional businesses namely lacquerware, jaggery, salt, brawn slab sugar, fish-paste, dried fish, fish sauce and weaving were extended to boom the economy. But, some of businesses faded out in the time of British colonial era.

In the post-independence era, the government and the people joined hands in development of domestic science in Myanmar.

Myanmar relies on the agricultural sector implemented by the farmers residing in rural areas, accounting for 75 per cent of the total population of the country. Only when domestic industries flourish, will they uplift their living standard.

These industries do not need the larger amount of capital similar to that of heavy factories and workshops. They can operate themselves by spending the moderate amount of capital.

As such, these industries are suitable for the people during the financial crisis period.

At present, rural people are engaging in breeding of buffalos, cows, sheep, goats, chickens, pigs, ducks and fish in addition to production of brick, pot, charcoal, lime, salt, umbrella, slipper, leather, rattan, kitchen utensils, soap, coffee powder, groundnut oil, sesame oil and palm oil.

Rural young women making thread of cotton wool for production of textile as traditional works.

Some of productions are manufactured with the use of machinery. However, traditional weaving, production of baskets made of bamboo, mats and pottery industries are being operated as Myanmar's traditional works.—Zeyar Htet (Minbu)/ GNLM

Carefully nurture children with good practices of democracy

SINCE early childhood, parents and guardians as well as the authorities should carefully nurture the children to comprehensively understand the basic practices of democracy.

Todays' children will be adult in the future to serve the duty of the country. To be able to walk along the correct path of life, those children should be undergone training and nurturing under supervision of the experienced adults and the authorities.

While passing the student life, those children must be taught the rights and liability of democracy. Dos and don'ts in the democracy must be given to the children. As such, they will have the capability to analyze all the moves in the democratization process. They have to keep a concept in mind that undisciplined acts are shameful in democracy.

> To have a good practice of democracy, those children must be nurtured with the public ethics. Such kind of ethic will steer them how to associate with the people with politeness, critical thinking, rationality and skill of analysis.

In contrast, children must be nurtured with knowledge of democracy to uphold the concept not to commit acts of bulling, assaulting, encroaching and imposing pressure, coercion and threats into others. In addition, they must have the knowledge to esteem the mental and physical movements of others regardless of poorness and richness.

The children must be taught basic lessons of democracy in school syllabus at different levels to be familiar with the democratic ethics. Parents and teachers need to provide norms and standards of democracy to the students. The elderly need to share their experiences of democracy to new generations so as to firmly stronghold the democracy in the society.

The lessons on bulling in democracy and extreme democracy must be given to the children. As such, they will have the capability to exercise the democracy without dancing to the tune of others and without following the persuasion of others.

To have a good practice of democracy, those children must be nurtured with the public ethics. Such kind of ethic will steer them how to associate with the people with politeness, critical thinking, rationality and skill of analysis.

In fact, all the adults are responsible for building the nation. Likewise, all the youths are responsible for supporting the adults. At the same time, all the children are responsible for learning the practices of democracy. All in all, the entire ethnic nationals are responsible for shaping the democratic country.

■ ■ ■

Fake medicines, recycled
India COV

From fake medicines to fire extinguishers disguised as oxygen
India's coronavirus crisis has been lucrative for its ever-inventiv

KOMAL Taneja's husband Chandrakant died gasping for breath at his New Delhi home last month after the oxygen canister that they paid $200 for on the internet never arrived.

"We desperately tried to find a hospital bed for a week … Two private hospitals asked us for a million rupees ($13,800) in advance," Komal, her voice cracking on the phone, told AFP news agency.

"Then we came across a contact online promising an oxygen cylinder delivery within an hour of making the 15,000 rupees ($205) payment. When we did, they asked for more money, and then stopped responding," Komal added.

Chandrakant, 36, who worked at the stock market, died on May 1, leaving his homemaker wife looking for a job to help look after his ailing parents.

Healthcare workers wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) walk out o
imposed nationwide lockdown as a preventive measure against the COVID-19
2020. **PHOTO / AFP**

India has a long history of audacious scams ripping off ordinary people, including beyond its borders.

In just one typical case, in December police busted a call centre that allegedly defrauded 4,500 Americans out of $14m.

Impersonating US officials, they told victims that their bank accounts were being used by drug cartels and that the only option was to convert their assets into Bitcoin, which the gang would then cash in.

One elaborate scam involving police and doctors that emerged in 2019 saw hundreds of villagers in Haryana declared dead in road accidents to claim insurance.

Investigators say many scam-

COVID-19 lockdowns cause inc

People drank more alcohol both in terms of amount and ho
downs across the world last year, according to an Organiza

OF about 60,000 individuals from 11 countries surveyed for seven weeks from May to June 2020, 43 percent said they drank more often than before the first wave of COVID-19, 26 percent said less often and 31 percent saw no change.

Thirty-six percent said their alcohol consumption increased, while 21 percent said it decreased and 43 percent said it was unchanged.

Stefano Scarpetta, director for employment, labor and social affairs at the OECD, said alcohol sales at restaurants and bars plummeted but drinking at home increased.

Increased alcohol consumption possibly reflects high stress levels, Scarpetta said.

It was also found that the number of emergency calls about domestic violence rose 60 percent across European Union countries during the pandemic, according to the Paris-based club of 38 mostly wealthy countries.

"Lockdown and stay at home orders exacerbated some of the negative behaviors associated with harmful alcohol consumption," it said.

Sales of alcohol drinks and accompanying tax revenues grew some 3 to 5 percent last year from 2019 in some nations such as Britain, the United States and Germany.

The survey showed the probability of binge drinking -- which it defined as having over 80 percent of a bottle wine or 1.5 liters of beer per drinking occasion -- increased for 23 percent of the respondents, but was reduced for 29 percent. Nearly half answered that it did not change.

Since late 2019 when the first virus outbreak was detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, many major cities have taken confinement measures such as hard lockdowns to curb the virus spread, forcing restaurants and bars to shut down or close earlier than usual and people to stay at home.

Scarpetta warned the reopening of the economy means that supportive measures for pandemic-hit sectors and individuals will be removed, a development that could lead to further bankruptcies and unemployment, and put people at risk of engaging in "harmful patterns of drinking" to get rid of stress.

"It is difficult to know whether these changes will continue when living conditions go back to nor-

l PPE: Scammers worsen VID misery

cylinders and recycled personal protective equipment (PPE), ve army of scammers, with sometimes deadly consequences.

f a hospital during a government- 9 coronavirus, in Mumbai on May 4,

mers have turned their attention to ripping off desperate COVID-19 patients and relatives as India suffers a devastating coronavirus surge.

Narang, a private company executive in Noida, said he was swindled by a sophisticated scam when he was desperately looking for an oxygen concentrator for a sick friend.

"I came across a link for a supplier which looked genuine, and even had a catalogue with different models. The prices, too, were competitive," Narang told AFP.

"I spoke with a person on the phone. He asked for about 45,000 rupees ($616) in two instalments. I was sure it was genuine and even recommended this supplier to another acquaintance.

The device never arrived.

Narang's case is one of at least 600 investigations launched by police in New Delhi alone in recent weeks with people desperately looking for oxygen, hospital beds and drugs.

"These criminals saw it as an opportune moment to make an entry," senior Delhi police officer Shibesh Singh told AFP.

His Crime Branch teams have already arrested many scammers, including a gang that made and sold counterfeit doses of the antiviral drug Remdesivir for up to 40 times the market price.

"These people were producing fake vials which cost them about 20 rupees (30 cents) and (they) sold it in the market for anything above 10,000 rupees," Singh said.

In another case, a gang repainted fire extinguishers and sold them as oxygen cylinders, while another posed as doctors offering non-existent hospital beds.

This week, six men were reportedly arrested on suspicion of washing, repackaging and selling several tonnes of used surgical gloves from hospitals.

"We can only urge the people to be extra cautious while approaching such contacts for online help," Singh said.

Some victims are demanding tough punishments.

"Hang them all," said Narang.

"If not that, then the government should ensure life imprisonment. This isn't just mental or financial, they are playing with human life."

SOURCE: AFP

crease in alcohol intake: OECD

w often it was consumed during the initial coronavirus lock- ation for Economic Cooperation and Development survey.

mality, but the experience of previous crises suggests that we may see an increase in problematic drinking in the medium term," he said. The data was collected in 10 OECD members -- Australia, Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Switzerland, Britain and the United States -- plus Brazil, a non-OECD member.

SOURCE: KYODO

Sales of alcohol drinks and accompanying tax revenues grew some 3 to 5 percent last year from 2019 in some nations such as Britain, the United States and Germany. A patron stands in front of a shelf full of wine bottles at a liquor story in the Brooklyn borough of New York City on March 20. **PHOTO: ANGELA WEISS/AFP**

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Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 6 June 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 7 June 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Mandalay, Magway regions and Eastern Shan State, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw, Sagaing, Ayeyawady regions and Shan (North and South), Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavyfalls in Taninthayi Region and Chin, Rakhine, Kayin, Mon states. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Sea will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (5-8) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of rain in Upper Sagaing, Bago, Yangon, Ayeyawady, Taninthayi regions and Kachin, Shan, Rakhine, Kayin, Mon states.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 June 2021: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 June 2021: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (80%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 7 June 2021: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Acropolis makeover stirs Greek antiquity row

CONTROVERSY has engulfed an ambitious restoration project on the Acropolis, with critics accusing the Greek government of spoiling the country's priceless heritage.

Most of the fire has been directed at a new concrete walkway unveiled in December, which main opposition leader Alexis Tsipras said constitutes "abuse" of Greece's most vaunted archaeological site.

A former member of the Acropolis restoration team, veteran architect Tasos Tanoulas, has called the new paths "foreign" and "stifling" to the 5th-century BCE monument.

The wider restoration project-delivered in little more than a year — was done without the care needed to safeguard a monument that is for many emblematic of Greece, critics charge.

The government says it has taken all necessary precautions and that the attacks are politically motivated.

Over 3.5 million people visited the Acropolis in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic shut down travel.

The culture ministry this week announced further improvements to the Acropolis for disabled visitors, which it said were carried out after consulting with leading associations for people with disabilities.

The ministry said signs in Braille and easier-to-read bold fonts would be installed, in addition to scaled models of the monuments, handrails and slope warnings. But risks remain. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel-Palestinian violence prompted 'uncomfortable' Israel-UAE conversations

Last month's Israeli-Palestinian violence triggered "uncomfortable conversations" between business partners in Israel and the United Arab Emirates just months after the countries normalised ties, the deputy mayor of Jerusalem told AFP.

But the conversations were "open" and "everybody was very moderate and understanding", Fleur Hassan-Nahoum said.

Speaking on the sidelines of a bilateral investment conference in Dubai, Hassan-Nahoum, co-founder of the UAE-Israel Business Council, also expressed hope that trade between the two countries would exceed the billion-dollar mark in the coming year.

The UAE in 2020 became only the third Arab country to establish full ties with Israel, under a Washington-backed deal condemned by the Palestinians.

The two sides have since announced a string of deals on investment, business cooperation and visa-free travel.

But last month, clashes in Jerusalem sparked an 11-day flare-up that saw Israeli jets pound the Gaza Strip, while Palestinian militants there fired thousands of rockets into Israel.

"It wasn't easy," Hassan-Nahoum said of the atmosphere between Israeli business leaders and their UAE counterparts.

"I am involved in a lot of different forums of Israelis and Emiratis and there were some uncomfortable conversations, but it was important that we had those conversations," she said.

"We had very open conversations on areas of disagreements... people had a lot of questions about the (Israeli) military campaign" which involved air and mortar strikes on Gaza, she added. — AFP ■

Nigeria govt says 'indefinitely' suspending Twitter in country

Nigeria announced on Friday it was suspending Twitter operations in the country, saying the platform was being used for activities "capable of undermining Nigeria's corporate existence."

The information ministry said the federal government had "suspended (Twitter) indefinitely," in a statement that came two days after the social media giant deleted a remark on President Muhammadu Buhari's official account for breaking its regulations.— AFP ■

El Salvador's Bukele to propose making bitcoin legal tender

EL SALVADOR may become the first country to make bitcoin legal tender, President Nayid Bukele announced Saturday, saying he would soon propose a bill that could transform the remittance-dependent economy.

The move would make the Central American nation the first in the world to formally accept the cryptocurrency as legal money and would "allow the financial inclusion of thousands of people who are outside the legal economy," Bukele said.

"Next week, I will send to Congress a bill that makes Bitcoin legal money," the populist leader said during a video message to the Bitcoin 2021 conference in Miami, Florida.

The bill aims to create jobs, he said, in a country where "70 per cent of the population does not have a bank account and works in the informal economy."

The El Salvador government is yet to give details of the bill, which will require approval from a parliament dominated by the president's allies.

Remittances from Salvadorans working overseas represent a major chunk of the economy — equivalent to roughly 22 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

El Salvador's President Nayib Bukele said legalizing bitcoin would transform the remittance-dependent economy. **PHOTO: AFP**

In 2020, remittances to the country totaled $5.9 billion, according to official reports.

According to Bukele, bitcoin represented "the fastest growing way to transfer" those billions of dollars in remittances and to prevent millions from being lost to intermediaries.

"Thanks to the use of bitcoin, the amount received by more than a million low-income families increases by several billion dollars every year," said the president.

"This improves life and the future of millions of people."

The cryptocurrency market grew to more than $2.5 trillion in mid-May 2020, according to the Coinmarketcap page, driven by interest from increasingly serious investors from Wall Street to Silicon Valley.

But the volatility of bitcoin-currently priced at $36,127 — and its murky legal status has raised questions about whether it could ever replace fiat currency in day-to-day transactions. — AFP ■

Mexico votes with AMLO's 'transformation' at stake

MEXICANS vote Sunday in elections seen as pivotal to President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's promised "transformation" of a country shaken by the coronavirus pandemic, a deep recession and drug-related violence.

The midterm polls, which get under way at 08:00 am (1300 GMT), will elect the 500 members of the lower house of Congress, 15 of 32 state governors and thousands of local politicians.

The vote is viewed as critical to the prospects of Lopez Obrador-known by his initials AMLO — pushing through reforms under his so-called "Fourth Transformation" plan.

"What's at stake is nothing less than the future of Mexico," Pamela Starr, professor at the University of Southern California, said in a panel discussion about the elections.

"Voters are choosing really between two competing visions of Mexico and its future — between Lopez Obrador's Fourth Transformation and to a certain extent a return to the policies that preceded it."

Mexicans will vote in elections seen as critical to President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's reform agenda. **PHOTO: AFP**

Referendum on AMLO

Lopez Obrador was elected in 2018 for a term of six years, vowing to overhaul Mexico's "neoliberal" economic model, root out corruption and end profligacy by a privileged elite.

The future of the left-wing populist's reform agenda — such as seeking greater energy independence — hinges on whether voters punish him for issues including the pandemic and a deadly Mexico City rail accident.

"The election is widely seen as a referendum on AMLO and strong support for the ruling coalition could embolden the president to pursue more interventionist policies," said analysts at the Capital Economics consultancy firm.

Mexico's economy, the second-largest in Latin America, plunged by 8.5 per cent in 2020 in the worst slump in decades, although the government predicts a rebound this year. — AFP ■

Swiss mired in poisonous row over pesticides

THE idyllic image of peaceful Swiss Alpine pastures is being shattered by upcoming votes on pesticides which have sharply divided opinion in rural Switzerland.

The Swiss will vote on June 13 on a proposal which, if it passes, would make Switzerland the first country in the world to ban synthetic pesticides.

Proponents seek to ban pesticides with non-naturally occurring chemicals -- and not only for agriculture but also for public green spaces, private gardens, and even for killing the weeds on railway tracks.

Farmers in the "Yes" campaign say they have been the victims of insults, threats and intimidation. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The initiative, entitled "For a Switzerland free from synthetic pesticides", would also ban the import of foodstuffs produced with synthetic pesticides, so as not to put Swiss farmers at a disadvantage.

A campaign marked by heated debates boiled over in the western Vaud region when arsonists torched a trailer in a field displaying banners calling for a "No" vote, infuriating farmers.

Meanwhile farmers in the "Yes" campaign say they have been the victims of insults, threats and intimidation.

- Slurry on the ballot -

Under Switzerland's direct democracy system, referendums and popular votes occur every few months at national, regional and local levels. Any topic can be put to a national vote as long as it gathers 100,000 signatures in the wealthy nation of 8.6 million people. — AFP ■

Drought-hit California scales up plan to truck salmon to ocean

California's fish and wildlife department have taken "the proactive measure of trucking millions of hatchery-raised" juvenile salmon to the sea . **PHOTO : AFP**

WITH chronic drought drying up rivers earlier than usual this year, California is scaling up a drastic operation to help its famous Chinook salmon reach the Pacific -- transporting the fry by road in dozens of large tanker trucks.

The tasty migratory fish are typically born in rivers, swim to the ocean where they reach maturity and can remain for several years, before returning to their native rivers to spawn and die.

But drought-hit rivers with too little flow or unusually warm water can fatally disrupt that cycle, causing California's fish and wildlife department to take "the proactive measure of trucking millions of hatchery-raised" juvenile salmon to the sea.

"Trucking young salmon to downstream release sites has proven to be one of the best ways to increase survival to the ocean during dry conditions," said northern California hatchery chief Jason Julienne in a recent statement.

While road transportation of salmon dates back to the 1980s, early drought conditions this summer mean authorities plan to boost the size of the operation by 20 percent. — AFP ■

'Sea snot' on Turkey's shores alarms environmentalists

A thick, brown, bubbly foam dubbed "sea snot" has covered the shores of the Sea of Marmara, alarming Istanbul residents and raising new environmental concerns.

The naturally-occurring mucilage was first documented in Turkey in 2007, when it was also seen in parts of the Aegean Sea near Greece.

But this outbreak is the largest on record, blamed by experts on a combination of pollution and global warming, which speeds up the growth of algae responsible for the slimy sludge.

Associate Professor Muharrem Balci of Istanbul University said when the algae grow out of control in springtime, as they have done this year, they block out the sun and cause oxygen depletion for the fish in the sea.

The viscous substance lapping the shores of Istanbul comes from a sort of nutrient overload for the algae, which feast on warm weather and water pollution that has grown progressively worse in the past 40 years, Balci said.

The naturally-occurring mucilage was first documented in Turkey in 2007, when it was also seen in parts of the Aegean Sea near Greece. **PHOTO: AFP**

"This mucilage is now covering the sea surface like a tent canvas," Balci told AFP.

"After a while, this cover collapses to the bottom and covers the (sea floor's) ecosystem."

#photo1

This could poison the sea's mussels and creatures such as crabs.

"It will smell like a rotten egg unless this process is halted," he said. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Biden administration will restore key environmental protections

THE administration of President Joe Biden on Friday announced it would restore protections under the Endangered Species Act, a law credited with saving iconic animals like the gray wolf and bald eagle, which were loosened by his predecessor Donald Trump.

Conservation groups welcomed the move but said they were concerned about how long the reversal might take. — AFP ■

Deadline looms for French pig farmers on castration choice

FOR centuries, male pigs have been castrated to make them less aggressive and to ensure quality control. But French farmers are facing a deadline to end a painful practice that few consumers are still willing to accept.

From January 2022, surgical castration will require anaesthesia, a complicating factor for the procedure that will inevitably increase production costs.

Several countries in Europe have already outlawed, or historically avoided, surgical castration which lets producers maximise the size of a pig before slaughter. — AFP ■

Australian researchers to use AI for koala facial recognition

RESEARCHERS at an Australian university are set to trial the use of artificial intelligence facial recognition technology to monitor koala crossings to aid in the conservation of this iconic species.

In a statement on Tuesday, Griffith University said Associate Professor Jun Zhou will lead a team of artificial intelligence researchers in the two-year pilot study, which aims to set up an AI-based monitoring facility that will use a network of cameras to analyze how koalas are crossing busy roads. — AFP ■

Biden says will stand with European allies ahead of Putin summit

THE United States will stand with its European allies against Russia, President Joe Biden has promised ahead of the first face-to-face meeting with Vladimir Putin of his administration.

Biden will head to Europe Wednesday, and is set to attend both the G-7 and NATO summits as well as holding a high-stakes meeting with the Russian leader in Geneva on June 16.

The summit comes amid the biggest crisis in ties between the two countries in years, with tensions high over a litany of issues including hacking allegations, human rights and claims of election meddling.

In an op-ed for the Washington Post published Saturday, the US president promised to shore up Washington's "democratic alliances" in the face of multiple crises and mounting threats from Moscow and Beijing.

"We are standing united to address Russia's challenges to European security, starting with its aggression in Ukraine, and there will be no doubt about the resolve of the United States to defend our democratic values, which we cannot separate from our interests," he wrote.

"President Putin knows that I will not hesitate to respond to future harmful activities," he said.

"When we meet, I will again underscore the commitment of the United States, Europe and like-minded democracies to stand up for human rights and dignity." — AFP ■

Biden will head to Europe Wednesday, and is set to attend both the G-7 and NATO summits as well as holding a high-stakes meeting with the Russian leader in Geneva on June 16. **PHOTO: WHITE HOUSE / LAWRENCE JACKSON**

NEWS IN BRIEF

'Butcher of Bosnia' Mladic faces final genocide verdict

FORMER Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic will on Tuesday hear the decision on his appeal against his genocide conviction, in a Hague tribunal's final verdict on the 1995 Srebrenica massacre.

The ruling will be the closing chapter in the case against the man dubbed the "Butcher of the Balkans", who was sentenced to life imprisonment by a UN war crimes tribunal in 2017.

Now an ailing 78-year-old, the once-burly military strongman of the 1992-1995 Bosnian war is expected to be in court, where he has previously delivered angry outbursts against the West. Mothers of some of the 8,000 men and boys killed in the worst act of bloodshed on European soil since World War II will be outside the court where they have long campaigned for justice.

"We will go to The Hague to look the executioner in the eye once again as he is finally sentenced," Munira Subasic, president of one of the "Mothers of Srebrenica" associations, told AFP.

The verdict will be handed down at 1300 GMT, viewable on a livestream with a half hour delay because the courtroom is closed to journalists due to coronavirus restrictions, at the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals. — AFP ■

Suicide bomber kills two people in Somali capital

AT least two people were killed and many more wounded when a suicide bomber targeted military personnel in the Somali capital Mogadishu on Saturday, police and witnesses said.

The sources said the suicide bomber struck near a busy minibus station as he targeted troops preparing to cross a checkpoint fortified with concrete blocks and manned by security officers.

"The blast was caused by a suicide bomber who was trying to strike a military convoy that was passing by the area," Somali police spokesman Sadik Dudishe told AFP.

"We have confirmed that two people were killed and 23 others wounded, some of them among the military personnel," Dudishe said.

Mohamud Adan, a police officer near the blast site, said the bombing occurred in a dense civilian area where people board minibuses for Afgoye, 25 kilometres (15 miles) northwest of Mogadishu.

A witness said the bomber was targeting a military vehicle but instead inflicted civilian casualties when his device detonated too early. — AFP ■

Peruvians choose between right-wing populist and radical leftist

PERUVIANS face a polarising choice between right-wing populist Keiko Fujimori and radical leftist Pedro Castillo when they elect a new president on Sunday, in a country desperate for a return to normalcy after years of political turbulence.

The new leader will need to tackle a country in crisis, suffering from recession and with the worst coronavirus death rate in the world after recording 184,000 mortalities among the 33 million population.

And after four presidents in the last three years and with seven of the last 10 of the country's leaders either having been convicted of or investigated for corruption, Peruvians will look to their next leader to bring an end to the recent turbulence.

At the height of the political storm in November last year, Peru had three different presidents in just five days.

Two million Peruvians have lost their jobs during the pandemic and nearly a third of the country now live in poverty, according to official figures.

Fujimori, 46, and Castillo, 51, caused a surprise when taking the top two spots in April's first round of voting.

Now voters must decide between their polar opposite economic and political programs.

In the most recent poll, Castillo had a narrow two percentage points edge but 18 percent of people remained undecided in a country where voting is obligatory.

Fujimori, the daughter of disgraced and jailed former president Alberto Fujimori, represents the neoliberal economic model of tax cuts and boosting private activity to generate jobs. — AFP ■

Sri Lanka recovers black box from sinking ship

The Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl has been slowly sinking into the Indian Ocean since Wednesday after a fire that raged for nearly two weeks within sight of the coast. **PHOTO: AFP**

A black box from a ship loaded with chemicals and plastic that is sinking off Sri Lanka has been located, officials said on Sunday, as investigators probe what caused the vessel to catch fire.

The Voyage Data Recorder, also known as a maritime "black box", enables investigators to review procedures and instructions ahead of an accident.

Sri Lankan authorities said they hope it will provide details of the ship's movements and its communications with the harbour in the capital Colombo, where it had been due to dock.

"The navy facilitated technicians to remove the VDR from the bridge which is still above the waterline," said navy spokesman Indika de Silva.

The Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl has been slowly sinking into the Indian Ocean since Wednesday after a fire that raged for nearly two weeks within sight of the coast.

The ship, carrying 25 tonnes of nitric acid and a huge amount of plastic raw materials, was heading to Colombo from Gujarat, India.

Sri Lankan officials have said an acid leak since May 11 may have sparked the blaze. Ports in Qatar and India had refused to offload the leaking nitric acid, they added.

Police on the island nation launched a criminal investigation, interviewing the vessel's skipper and chief engineer - both Russians - and its chief officer, an Indian, and seizing their passports. — AFP ■

Japanese rice dealers turn to China amid domestic consumption drop

THE Japan Agricultural Cooperatives group and wholesalers are stepping up efforts to export rice to the world's largest rice-consuming nation China as the domestic market shrinks.

Those dealers are tying up with Chinese companies and promoting high-priced, high-quality rice on the back of the Japanese food boom in China, although concerns remain over the impact of deteriorating U.S.-China relations on Japan-China ties.

A customer (R) has bags of Japanese rice in his shopping baskets at a grocery store in Beijing on July 26, 2007. **PHOTO: KYODO**

According to Japan's agriculture ministry, Japanese rice costs two to three times more than rice grown in China or the United States. Export costs make Japanese rice even more expensive in overseas markets.

Thus prices need to be reduced for Japanese rice to be affordable for average families and competitive in overseas markets.

China consumes about 140 million tons of rice annually, about 20 times more than Japan, where rice consumption has fallen by around 100,000 tons each year due largely to a falling number of children and changes in people's eating habits.

In April, Zen-Noh International Corp., a Tokyo-based subsidiary of the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives, said it will supply rice made in Niigata Prefecture for Chinese food giant COFCO to sell under its new imported rice brand King Food. — Kyodo News ■

Small Sri Lanka harbours big maritime ambitions

THE dramatic recent fire on a container ship off Sri Lanka highlighted the risks involved in the island nation's ambitions to become one of the world's busiest maritime transport hubs.

The MV X-Press Pearl burned for 13 days, releasing tonnes of chemicals and plastics.

The sinking ship's nearly 300 tonnes of fuel oil may now leak into the Indian Ocean.

How important is Sri Lanka?

Thanks to its geographical location, around 200 container ships and oil tankers sail past every day on the busy routes between Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

But Sri Lanka is also the biggest so-called transhipment hub in South Asia, meaning that some of the world's biggest ships dock in Sri Lanka to load and unload containers.

Colombo, four days by ship from Singapore and four and a half to Dubai, is the only port between those two places deep enough to handle ships with more than 18,000 containers.

What are its plans?

Colombo Port now hopes to double its annual handling capacity of 7.2 million containers in four years.

"We are strategically located and we are strategically important," Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA) chairman Daya Ratnayake told AFP.

"But, we have a serious problem here, the problem is (lack of) capacity."

India is developing a deep-water port at Vizhinjam on its southwest tip and is planning another in the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal, both of which may steal some of Colombo's trade. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Engine No. 1 converts tiny ExxonMobil stake into big win

EXXONMOBIL has spent more than two decades sparring with activists over climate change, turning back virtually every shareholder challenge at its annual meeting each spring.

But late last month, the oil giant, which has shunned renewable energy investments embraced by some rivals, suffered a landmark defeat when upstart investment fund Engine No.1 successfully won election of three of its four board candidates, overcoming fierce campaigning from management. A newly formed San Francisco-based investment group, Engine No.1 is a relative minnow in the world of finance, but now stands poised to steer the iconic US petroleum heavyweight in a new direction. Its victory points to the increased vulnerability of incumbent energy players to insurgent investors as public concern mounts over climate change. — AFP ■

India warns Twitter to comply with new IT rules

INDIA on Saturday issued "one last notice" to Twitter to comply with new IT regulations that the social media giant says threaten privacy guarantees. Digital rights activists say New Delhi's latest rules could be used by the government to identify authors of critical posts on social media sites. But the government argues they are needed to investigate national security offences and cases involving sexually explicit material.

India's electronics and IT ministry said Saturday it was "dismayed" over Twitter's "non-compliance" and flagged the May 26 deadline, when the new rules came into force.

"The refusal to comply demonstrates Twitter's lack of commitment and efforts towards providing a safe experience for people of India on its platforms," its notice said. — AFP ■

London's cabbies hope to fare better after Covid

BARRY IVENS, who has been driving London's iconic black taxi cabs for a quarter of a century, has never experienced anything like the past tumultuous year in the British capital.

As waves of coronavirus swept the country and lockdowns wrought havoc on his industry, the 53-year-old said the financial and mental anguish had "taken its toll".

"It's been really hard," Ivens told AFP from behind the wheel, as he plied the still-quiet streets of central London looking for customers.

He has relied on everything from repayment holidays on his mortgage and cab to government financial support schemes, and feels lucky to be alive given Covid-19 has caused nearly 128,000 deaths in Britain.

However, Ivens -- one of 15 members of Black Taxi Tour London, a collective offering bespoke guided tours alongside regular rides -- has also sorely missed the social side of his work.

"You're almost a showman for London," he said. "You miss that all the time, so your mental health has really gone through it.

"All I keep thinking is: I'm still here, I'm still driving the cab, my family's alright, let's keep going.

"It's like the wartime attitude that my nan (grandmother) used to have." — AFP ■

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CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (121S/122N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (121S/122N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **7-6-2021** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** 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 SEALAND MAERSK ASIA PTE LTD.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Canada jobless rate rises to 8.2% in May

CANADA'S unemployment rate edged up to 8.2 percent in May as strict measures to contain a third wave of Covid-19 cases caused job losses, Statistics Canada said Friday.

The jobless rate in March was 7.5 percent -- the lowest since the start of the pandemic -- but the economy lost 207,000 jobs in April and another 68,000 last month.

The May figure was three times larger than many economists had forecast, but experts predict a rebound in the job market in June as several Canadian provinces have started to roll back coronavirus-related restrictions.

The 8.2 percent unemployment rate in May was 0.1 percentage point higher than in April.

The job losses last month mostly hit part-time workers and were concentrated in the provinces of Ontario, the country's most populous, and Nova Scotia. Both had imposed new measures to combat the spread of the virus. — AFP ■

Province blocks salary for unvaccinated employees

THE head of a Pakistani province ordered Thursday that government employees who refuse to be vaccinated against Covid-19 would not be paid from next month. Sindh chief minister Murad Ali Shah announced the move after meeting with health officials to discuss the first cases of the delta variant detected in the province, which includes the megacity of Karachi.

"Any government employee who is not vaccinated should have their salary stopped from July," he tweeted, adding that orders had been given to the finance ministry.

A third wave of infections has begun to stabilise in the country after weeks of restrictions on public gatherings, but Sindh province has reported the highest number of cases since the pandemic began. — AFP ■

G7 nations reach 'historic' agreement over global corporate tax

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen (L) says a global minimum tax 'would end the race to the bottom in corporate taxation.'. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

FINANCE ministers from wealthy G7 nations on Saturday pledged to commit to a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15 per cent, rallying behind a US-backed plan.

"We... commit to a global minimum tax of at least 15 per cent on a country by country basis," said a statement at the conclusion of their London meeting.

The G7 hopes to reach a final agreement at the July gathering of the expanded G20 finance ministers group, it added.

"I'm delighted to announce that G7 finance ministers... have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system," said British finance minister Rishi Sunak, who chaired the two days of talks held in person after an easing of Covid-19 restrictions.

It was attended by counterparts from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States.

Sunak said the G7 had agreed to make the global tax system "fit for the global digital age and crucially to make sure that it's fair so that the right companies pay the right tax in the right places".

He thanked his counterparts for striking "a deal of historic significance that finally brings our global tax system into the 21st century".

The landmark move is aimed at getting multinationals -- especially tech giants -- to pay more into government coffers, which have been severely hit during the pandemic.

But it is bound to be seen with trepidation by smaller countries that rely on corporate taxation revenue to fill their coffers, such as Malta. Around 17 per cent of Malta's government revenues came from corporate taxes in 2019. The G7 talks have prepared the ground for a broader summit of G7 leaders in Cornwall, southwest England, starting Friday.— AFP ■

Asia-Pacific ministers agree on accelerating vaccine distribution

TRADE ministers from the Asia-Pacific region agreed Saturday on achieving a strong economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, starting with accelerating vaccine distribution.

The ministers from 21 economies that form the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation met virtually amid the pandemic, with New Zealand, the current APEC host, serving as chair.

"Recognizing the role of extensive COVID-19 immunization as a global public good, we urgently need to accelerate the production and distribution of safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable COVID-19 vaccines," they said in a joint statement, stressing trade and investment's role in ensuring widespread and equitable access to vaccines.

Supplied photo shows Japanese trade minister Hiroshi Kajiyama taking part in an online meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum on June 5, 2021, in Tokyo. **PHOTO: KYODO NEWS**

The trade ministers also said APEC economies will work proactively to support discussions for a temporary waiver of certain intellectual property protections on COVID-19 vaccines.

The mention of the waiver was included in the statement as New Zealand has announced its support of a proposal by India and South Africa for the World Trade Organization to temporarily suspend the intellectual property protections on the vaccines. In addition to the joint statement, the ministers issued a separate one on COVID-19 vaccine supply chains that said APEC economies will expedite the flow and transit of all vaccines and related goods through air, sea and land ports.— Kyodo News ■

Iran presidential hopefuls trade blame over economic woes

IRAN'S reformist and ultraconservative presidential candidates traded accusations Saturday over the country's economic crisis during the first pre-election debate broadcast live on television.

An Iranian man watches the first presidential candidates' debate at a shop in Tehran on June 5, 2021. Iranians are set to elect a successor to President Hassan Rouhani on June 18. **PHOTO: AFP**

Iranians are set to elect a successor to President Hassan Rouhani on June 18 amid widespread discontent over a deep economic and social crisis caused by the reimposition of crippling sanctions after the US pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal.

Iran's conservative-dominated Guardian Council approved seven candidates -- five ultraconservative and two reformists -- to run from a field of about 600 hopefuls.

Ultraconservative judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi is widely seen as a favourite, after the Council disqualified moderate conservative Ali Larijani.

On Saturday, ultraconservative candidates called on reformist hopeful Abdolnasser Hemmati, who is the country's central bank governor, to take responsibility for the crisis, and accused him of seeking to defend the government's record.

"Mr Hemmati, your governance was catastrophic, you are sitting here as a representative of Mr Rouhani," said Mohsen Rezai, a former chief of Iran's Revolutionary Guards. — AFP ■

Final vote test in Germany ahead of post-Merkel-era election

GERMANS in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt are heading to the polls on Sunday, with the far-right posing a tough challenge to Angela Merkel's conservatives in the final major test before the first general election in 16 years not to feature the veteran chancellor.

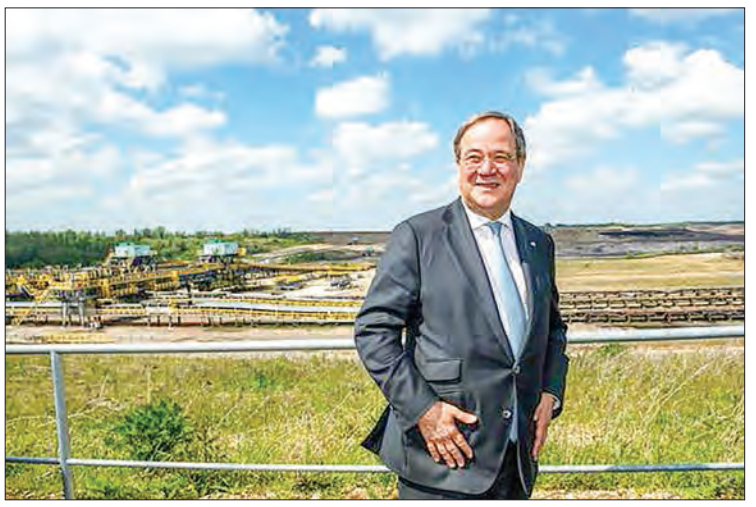
Saxony-Anhalt is one of Germany's smallest states with a population of just 2.2 million, but with Merkel's Christian Democratic Union running neck-and-neck with the far-right AfD there, the stakes could not be higher for the regional vote.

Victory for the AfD would be a devastating blow for the conservatives and seriously weaken the already fragile standing of the CDU's new leader Armin Laschet in the run-up to Germany's national election on September 26.

"If it turns out that the AfD is slightly stronger than the CDU on Sunday, then there could be debates about personnel in the CDU, and thus a weakening of the entire situation of the CDU," political scientist Hajo Funke of Berlin's Free University told AFP.

Merkel's party has been a dominant force in the eastern region for decades, topping all but one edition of state elections there since reunification in 1990.

But the far-right AfD established a strong foothold there in the last state election in 2016, having capitalised on anger over Merkel's decision to allow in a wave of migrants from conflict-torn countries such as Syria in 2015. — AFP ■



An AfD victory would be a devastating blow for the conservatives and seriously weaken the already fragile standing of the CDU's new leader Armin Laschet. **PHOTO: AFP**

Italian coastguard blocks German NGO rescue boat

The Italian coastguard has stopped a migrant rescue boat belonging to the German group Sea-Eye from operating due to safety breaches, it said on Saturday. **PHOTO: STRINGER/ANSA/AFP.**

THE Italian coastguard has stopped a migrant rescue boat belonging to the German group Sea-Eye from operating due to safety breaches, it said on Saturday.

"An inspection revealed various technical irregularities which could compromise not only the safety of crew members but also those who have been rescued," the coastguard said in a statement.

Among other things "the inspection confirmed that the ship's life-saving equipment is sufficient for a maximum number of 27 people... which means that in an emergency the crew would not be able" to guarantee the evacuation of all the people on board, it added.

It said the ship was, as of Friday, the subject of an "administrative immobilisation until the rectification of the noted irregularities".

The German group's hospital ship was anchored in the port of Palermo after disembarking 415 migrants in the Sicilian port of Pozzallo and observing a period of quarantine imposed by the health authorities.

In a statement to AFP on Saturday, the German non-governmental organisation condemned the coastguard's decision.

"As for other civilian rescue ships, the same technical reasons are now invoked to put an end to the Sea-Eye 4's missions ," it said.

"The argument is still that the German rescue ships routinely save too many people from drowning," said the NGO's president Gorden Isler, quoted in the statement. — AFP ■

British memorial opens in France to remember D-Day fallen

A memorial to almost 22,500 servicemen and women under British command killed during D-Day and subsequent battles is to be unveiled on Sunday in northern France, a tribute seen as a long overdue commemoration of their sacrifice.

The British Normandy Memorial, inscribed with the names of 22,442 men and women who lost their lives during the invasion of Nazi-occupied France in the summer of 1944, will open on a hillside in the Normandy village of Ver-sur-Mer on the 77th anniversary of the landings.

It overlooks Gold Beach, one of three beaches where British forces landed on the morning of June 6, 1944 to begin the liberation of Western Europe from Nazi occupation.

The memorial overlooks a beach where British forces landed on June 6, 1944. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The memorial -- constructed at a cost of £33 million ($47 million) met by both the UK government and private donors -- is the first such in Normandy to commemorate those who fell under British command.

"The construction of a national memorial in Normandy has been a long-held ambition of Normandy Veterans, frustrated that Britain alone among the main wartime allies did not have such a memorial," the Normandy Memorial Trust said in a statement ahead of the ceremony.

It consists of a series of 160 standing white stones where the names of the soldiers who fell are inscribed in chronological order from June 6 to August 31, 1944. Some 4,000 tonnes of stone were used. — AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

'An iron curtain': Exiled Belarusians protest on border

DRAPED in white-red-white Belarusian opposition flags, exiled Belarusians protested on Saturday at the Polish frontier, calling for President Alexander Lukashenko to lift a border closure.

"Europe: It's time for action!", "Impose Sanctions Please!" read some of the placards, as dozens of protesters lined a road clogged with hundreds of trucks waiting to go through border checks. "I have a feeling that an iron curtain is falling into place. It's frightening," said Lyubov Kovalchuk, who moved to Poland in December last year after being arrested for her activism. "It's breaking up families," Kovalchuk, a 42-year-old with short ginger hair, told AFP.Standing just a few hundred metres from the border checkpoint, her friend Katya Mirzoyeva, 63, said her fellow Belarusians were "living in a cage". — AFP ■

US says it will no longer seize reporters' records in leak probes

THE US government said Saturday it would stop secretly obtaining reporters' phone and email records during investigations into political leaks, ending a practice that was often criticized as undermining press freedom.

The New York Times this week reported that under Donald Trump's administration and continuing under President Joe Biden, the Justice Department fought a covert legal battle to access email logs of four of its reporters in a hunt for leak sources.

The Department of Justice said in a statement that "in a change to its longstanding practice -- (it) will not seek compulsory legal process in leak investigations to obtain source information from members of the news media."

It added that it had "completed a review to determine all instances in which the Department had pending compulsory requests from reporters in leak investigations. — AFP ■

MGF selects Myanmar golfers for XXXI SEA Games

Logo of Myanmar Golf Federation. **PHOTO: MGF**

OFFICIALS from Myanmar Golf Federation selected Myanmar national golfers at the Okkalapa Golf Course in Yangon on 6 June ahead of the upcoming XXXI SEA Games.

Top five winners from the first to fifth place were selected as the Myanmar national team.

The Myanmar Golf Federation held the first qualifier for the selection from 20 to 23 May at the Yangon Golf Course (Danyingon) and the second qualifier at the Okkalapa Golf Course from 3 to 6 June.

Sixteen players competed in the qualifiers, and 13 players from first to thirteen places after the first qualifying round qualified for the second round.

Hlaing Min Htet (Mandalay), ranked first to fifth after the first and second round of golfer selection and Raza Aung (Yangon), Lwin Moe (Monywa), Min Than Lwin Aung (Yangon) and Pyae Phyo Thu (Mandalay) were also selected as top five players.

The Myanmar Golf Federation will train the five golfers, selected from the qualifiers for the upcoming SEA Games. The XXXI SEA Games will be hosted by Vietnam from 21 November to 2 December.—Ko Nyi Lay/ GNLM

Federer ponders withdrawal from French Open as Djokovic, Nadal set new landmarks

ROGER Federer said Sunday he is considering withdrawing from the French Open despite reaching the fourth round as Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal set up clashes with two Italian teenagers widely seen as their Grand Slam heir apparents.

Two months shy of his 40th birthday, Federer, the 2009 champion, and probably taking part in his last Roland Garros, reached the second week for the 15th time.

His knife-edge 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (3/7), 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 win over 59th-ranked Dominik Koepfer took place in Court Philippe Chatrier devoid of fans and atmosphere due to a government-enforced Covid-19 curfew.

Federer, who underwent two knee surgeries last year and is playing just his third event since the 2020 Australian Open, is scheduled to face Italy's Matteo Berrettini on Monday.

"I don't know if I am going to play," said Federer whose 3hr 35min tie ended just before 12:45 on Sunday morning.

"I have to decide whether or not to continue playing. Is it too risky to keep putting pressure on the knee? Is it a good time to rest?"

The 20-time Grand Slam title winner has always said Wimbledon is his priority this year.

He is chasing a ninth title at the All England Club where the action starts on June 28.

He is also scheduled to play the warm-up grass court tournament in Halle beginning on June 14, the day after the French Open ends.

"Every match I have to reassess the situation and see the next morning in what state I wake up and how my knee is doing," added Federer.

Djokovic, the champion in Paris in 2016 and chasing a 19th Grand Slam title, brushed aside 93rd-ranked Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania 6-1, 6-4, 6-1. — AFP ■

Euro 2021: Heavyweights collide as France, Germany, Portugal clash

SOME of the jeopardy may be removed by the fact that the four best third-placed teams will qualify for the quarter-finals, but Euro 2020's Group F remains full of intrigue as reigning champions Portugal, World Cup holders France and Germany all face off, while Hungary could have their say too.

AFP Sport casts its eye over the four teams trying to reach the knockout stage.

Portugal

Portugal are reigning European champions and have reached at least the semi-finals in four of the last five Euros. They came second behind Ukraine in qualifying and, at 36, Cristiano Ronaldo is not getting any younger. However, Portugal also won the Nations League in 2019 and Ronaldo has arguably never been surrounded by so much talent: from Ruben Dias at the back to Bruno Fernandes, Bernardo Silva, Diogo Jota and Joao Felix. If they click, they could take some stopping.

France

"All the other countries envy us," shouted the front of French sports daily L'Equipe this week underneath pictures of Kylian Mbappe, Karim Benzema and Antoine Griezmann. In France they are understandably confident about their prospects of following their 2018 World Cup triumph with Euro glory.

Germany

Germany are three-time European champions and have reached at least the semi-finals at each of the last three Euros. However, since their disastrous showing at the 2018 World Cup, when they went out in the group stage, Germany's fortunes have not improved much. They topped their qualifying group ahead of the Netherlands, but in recent matches they were trounced 6-0 in Spain in the Nations League and suffered a 2-1 home defeat by North Macedonia in World Cup qualifying.

Hungary

The Magyars reached a second straight European Championship via the Nations League play-offs -- they finished fourth in their qualifying group but won play-off ties against Bulgaria and Iceland to qualify.

Coached by the Italian Marco Rossi, Hungary will get to play their first two matches at home in Budapest but their best player, RB Leipzig midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai, is out injured. It would be an enormous surprise if they finished anywhere other than bottom of their group. — AFP ■

Cristiano Ronaldo and Kylian Mbappe will go head to head at Euro 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

American Lexi Thompson is the 54-hole leader at the US Women's Open at Olympic Club in San Francisco. **PHOTO: AFP**

Thompson powers into US Women's Open lead

LEXI THOMPSON fired five birdies without a bogey in a sparkling round on the Olympic Club Lake Course Saturday to grab a one-shot lead in the US Women's Open.

The American's five-under par 66 on the imposing layout gave her a 54-hole total of seven-under par 64 and a one-stroke edge over second-round leader Yuka Saso of the Philippines.

Saso, a 19-year-old whose pro resume features two wins on the Japan LPGA tour, scrambled to an even par 71 for 207 — leading by as many as two but dropping out of a share of the lead with her fourth bogey of the day at 18.

US amateur Megha Ganne, a 17-year-old New Jersey high school student, kept herself in contention with a one-over par 72 that left her sharing third on 210 with South Korean Lee6 Jeong-eun, who battled her way to a two-over 73.

China's Feng Shanshan was alone in fifth after a 72 for 211. — AFP ■