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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.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects work processes of Myanmar Coffee Association, PyinOoLwin Coffee Park

STATE Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspected the operations of the Myanmar Coffee Association and the PyinOoLwin Coffee Park yesterday.

First, the Senior General and party arrived at the Myanmar Coffee Association. They were welcomed by Patron of the Myanmar Coffee Association and Director of the Mandalay Coffee Group (MCG) U Ye Myint and other officials. At the briefing hall, they reported on the coffee plantation, coffee production processes, growing of coffee seedlings, coffee flavour and quality control activities and distribution processes in line with the grade with video clips.

Regarding the presentation, the Senior General said efforts must be made for the Myanmar coffee brand to be accepted and penetrate the world. The discussions were also held with the coffee entrepreneurs to develop the coffee industry before the Thingyan period. The ministry concerned the chief ministers of respective regions with coffee plantations, and coffee entrepreneurs organized an organization to form the coffee



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing views the coffee production process at the Mandalay Coffee Group (MCG) in PyinOoLwin yesterday.

association. It will assist the entrepreneurs. There should be systematic production pro-

cedures and packaging systems to ensure quality coffee products. The government also

expands the agriculture and livestock breeding institutes and colleges to develop the ag-

riculture and livestock breeding sectors and human resources.

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Statement to appreciate teachers' efforts

TEACHERS are honoured as part of the Five Infinite Venerables, and the manner of paying respect to the teachers can be only seen in Myanmar as a tradition. The teachers teach their pupils based on their goodwill like their own children and dutifully serve a teacher's duties. They must train their pupils and students in the best discipline. They see that they grasp their lessons well. They instruct them in the arts and sciences, they provide for their safety in every quarter, and they introduce them to their friends and associates.

As the COVID-19 infection rate is controlled to a certain extent, the basic education high, middle and primary schools under the Department of Basic Education have reopened across nation for the 2021-2022 academic year starting 1 June.

Those who want to seek good sake of one party, political extremist NLD members and supporters, NUG, CRPH and PDF committed arson attacks at the schools using mines, homemade bombs and grenades to fail the teaching processes, and threatened the teachers in addition to the incitements, social punishment and threats against education staff to join CDM while the officials made preparations for the reopening of schools and during the current teaching period. Their doings left some casualties, and the State Administration Council has expressed its deepest condolences and sympathy to the victims' families.

The SAC also appreciates the concerted efforts of teachers, who understand two virtues, Hiri — shame at doing evil —and Otappa—fear of the results of doing evil —for teaching the new generations of the country amid such difficulties and challenges.

The security forces will take extraordinary measures to ensure the safety of teachers who are making efforts in the academic sector for the next generations in order to promote the education qualification. The people should keep security awareness and cooperate with the security members in community peace and peaceful learning of children.

Information Team
State Administration Council

Foreigners enter Yangon Int'l Airport as services return to normality

YANGON International Airport was reopened to international travellers and businesses on 17 April after a two-year closure due to COVID-19.

The first flight of SQ-761 from Singapore landed at the airport at 9 am on the reopening day. Arrivals from Malaysia and Bangkok were followed, and officials welcomed them.

On 17 April, 688 departures and 393 arrivals from Yangon International Airport. The service was provided by MAI and MNA airlines.

The first flight was launched on 18 April by passengers from Dubai, Singapore, Bangkok, and Malaysia, and a total of 517 passengers have arrived on five airlines.

On 19 April, the Bangkok-Yangon flight MAI-336 landed first with 32 passengers, followed by the UB-026 Kuala Lumpur-Yangon flight with 106 passengers.

Two hundred eighty-eight passengers arrived at the air-

port via five airlines from China (Guangzhou), South Korea (Incheon), Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand on the same day.

In the evening, Guangzhou, Incheon, and Bangkok tourists continued to arrive.

"Yangon International Airport caters to all needs of travellers. Everyone is happy about the reopening of Myanmar's best airport," said a Yangon Aerodrome Company (YACL) official at the Yangon International Airport.

"And the country's development is only through these airports, which are the country's gateways. The tourism industry also needs to make it more attractive for tourists.

"If we work harder to revitalize the tourism sector, we will be able to surpass the previous tourist arrivals as tourists love our country's natural beauty," he added.

Upon arrival at Yangon International Airport, passengers



Foreigners are pictured at currency exchange counters at Yangon International Airport. PHOTO: KANU

are required to go to the airport health counter and show the necessary COVID-19 virus-free PCR test and immunization certificate.

Once the documents have been verified, passengers can go through the immigration

process and pick up their luggage.

After departure from the arrival area, passengers can obtain the information on the entrance to the Health Counter Quarantine arranged by the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism.

The quarantine will be provided with check-in and check-out transportation arrangements, and foreign travellers on commercial flights will be able to enter the hotel with a one-day quarantine.—Nyein Thu (MNA)/GNLM

Online seminar to be held to create better future for youths with innovations

THE World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the ASEAN Secretariat will jointly conduct the "Let's the WIPO and ASEAN regional conference creates a better future for youths with innovations" from 11 am to 1:45 pm on 25 April 2022.

Those interested in online seminars can register at https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=70428 and contact the Youth Affairs Department by dialling 067-3413947, 09-777333545 and 09-425325133. — MNA

E-ASEAN youth volunteer programme to be held in June

THE E-ASEAN Youth Volunteer Programme- E-AYVP, jointly organized by the Association for University of Social Engagement Thailand-EnT and U2T of the University of Chiang Mai and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, will be held online from 27 June to 8 July 2022 under the title "Community Development and Poverty Eradication".

The programme invites youth representatives between the age of 18 and 30 from ASEAN nations and the ASEAN +3 nations who have proficiency in English and volunteer experience and who can write/implement development and poverty alleviation programmes that will benefit the community, with leadership experience and ability interested in helping the community.

For more information about the programme, the applicants can visit the Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AYVPKUM or www.ayvpukm.com.my and apply through <http://ayvpukm.com.my> by 30 April 2022.

For more information, the applicants can reach the Department of Youth Affairs, telephone number: 067-3413947, 09-777333545, 09-425325133 during office hours. — MNA

The system that met the requirements of the country will be practised

OUR country has to rigidly stand with a Union based on Democracy and Federal System elected by people. Democracy, herein, is an administrative mechanism chosen by people and the Federal System is a system of dividing up authoritative power and sharing an equal opportunity. Notwithstanding the designation of the Federal System laying hedges, the system that met the requirements of the country will be practised.

(Excerpt from Speech Delivered by Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Maha Thray Sithu Min Aung Hlaing at the Parade of the 77th Anniversary Armed Forces Day on 27th March 2022.)

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects work processes of Myanmar Coffee Association ...

FROM PAGE-1
Agrochemicals such as fertilizers should be produced from the waste from breeding, natural fertilizer and manure from agriculture. It should be done successfully, and it can also increase the country's revenue. Then, the Senior General and party looked a round the test condition of coffee quality and taste in the laboratory and production processes of the

Mandalay Coffee Group (MCG) factory.
The Senior General went to the Coffee Farm (Pwaytaung) to check the upgrade works into PyinOoLwin Coffee Park.
Director-General Dr Ye Tin Tun of the Agriculture Department presented the history of the Pwaytaung coffee farm, intentions of implementing PyinOoLwin Coffee Park, coffee species and quality grown on



The Senior General looks around the coffee quality and taste conditions at the Mandalay Coffee Group (MCG).

The officials should explain the coffee plantation to raise the public interest. The PyinOoLwin Coffee Park should provide the proper suggestions to the coffee entrepreneurs and support Myanmar coffee to penetrate the world market.

the farm and coffee techniques sharing programmes to be conducted with the Myanmar Coffee Association.
The Senior General also added that it should choose quality coffee that guarantees fair prices and interests of entrepreneurs and coffee farmers instead of growing various species of coffee. The officials should explain the coffee plantation to raise the public interest. The PyinOoLwin Coffee Park should provide the proper suggestions to the coffee entrepreneurs and support Myanmar coffee to penetrate the world market.
Then, the Senior General and party viewed around the PyinOoLwin Coffee Park. — MNA



SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing and party pay an observation tour around the Coffee Farm (Pwaytaung) in PyinOoLwin on 19 April 2022.

SAC Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing inspects PyinOoLwin Railway Station



State Administration Council Chairman Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing makes an inspection tour around the PyinOoLwin Railway Station on 19 April 2022.

CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Prime Minister Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, accompanied by Council Joint-Secretary Lt-Gen Ye Win Oo, Union Minister U Tin Htut Oo, Union Minister U Khin Maung Yi, Mandalay Region Chief Minister U Maung Ko, Chief of General Staff (Army, Navy and Air) General

Maung Maung Aye, Tatmadaw senior officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services, Central Command Commander Maj-Gen Ko Ko Oo and officials, inspected the PyinOoLwin Railway Station yesterday morning.

As the building of PyinOoLwin Railway Station is an ancient structure, it needs to be preserved and protected sustainably.

The Prime Minister and party were welcomed by Union Minister for Transport and Communications Admiral Tin Aung San and officials. Upon the presentation during the inspection of the station, the Prime Minister discussed conditions that need to

It is a 123-year-old railway station that has contributed significantly to the flow of goods and people’s travel. All of the building and its decorations are preserved. Photographic records of the trains are displayed in the station lobby.



The Senior General goes for a train ride during his inspection tour at the PyinOoLwin Railway Station.

be maintained inside and outside the station, to preserve the station building as it is an ancient building, and conditions for upgrading trains and railways. The Prime Minister and party also took a train ride from the PyinOoLwin Station to the Zeepingyi Station through Anisakhan and Thonetaung stations. They observed the calm and beautiful scenery of the PyinOoLwin area, green fields, and local people’s movements along the railway line. Afterwards, he instructed officials to upgrade trains and railways to develop rail transport

and leisure train travel to make the environment along the railway line clean and tidy and beautiful. The PyinOoLwin Railway Station was built in 1899 at 3,506 feet above sea level and is located on the Mandalay-PyinOoLwin-Nawngkhio-Hsipaw-Lashio rail section. It is a 123-year-old railway station that has contributed significantly to the flow of goods and people’s travel. All of the building and its decorations are preserved. Photographic records of the trains are displayed in the station lobby. — MNA

UEC Chairman receives Chinese Ambassador

UNION Election Commission Chairman U Thein Soe received Chinese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Chen Hai, in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

During the meeting, the Chinese ambassador raised questions on the ongoing work plans being conducted in line with the five-point road map of the State Administration Council, future

work plans and inspections of political parties.

Then, the UEC chairman frankly discussed the commission's activities, amendment of laws and rules to organize the election, compiling of voter lists, inspections of political parties and China-Myanmar bilateral relations. – MNA



UEC Chair U Thein Soe receives Mr Chen Hai, Ambassador of China to Myanmar in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday.

Clarification on Fuel Oil



THE following is a clarification from Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun, the SAC Information Team leader, regarding recent ru-

mours about fuel oil on social media networks.

Maj-Gen Zaw Min Tun clarified, “The rumours about fuel oil have appeared, and some unscrupulous media outlets are spreading them. So, some fuel oil filling stations were closed, causing fuel oil shortages in the market. The fuel oil is imported sufficiently for the country.

Last time, the number of days was referred to talk about for the fuel oil sufficiency. Currently, the amount of fuel oil is more sufficient than that of the previous situation. The root cause is based on the measures to sell dollars to importers in order to stabilize fuel oil prices. When the importer

companies are urged to sell at a K1,850 per dollar rate, they do not want to sell the fuel oil at that fixed dollar exchange rate. That is why they are spreading those rumours. In this regard, necessary measures are carried out to issue warnings and notifications to the concerned individuals and companies.

Moreover, dollar-selling programmes for fuel oil distributors will resume on 20 April. The fuel oil imported by various importer companies will also enter Myanmar shortly.

The public is urged not to believe in the spreading rumours as the fuel oil is sufficient locally.” —MNA

Govt working on local fuel supply as usual

THE authorities released announcements urging the public that there is no need to worry about the supply of petrol in the country.

The rumours have spread that the country is facing a shortage of petrol stocks at the Thilawa oil storage tank terminal starting Monday. It caused long lines of vehicles waiting for fuel starting yesterday morning, and some fuel stations were temporarily closed.

The country has a sufficient supply of fuel. Currently, there have been two fuel oil tankers that have docked at the Depot, and fuel oil cannot be unloaded into fuel storage tanks due to Thinggyan holidays. Therefore, according to the statement of

Ministry of Electricity and Energy, there would be no shortage of fuel stocks.

Some media reported fake news that the fuel is imported from China via Sri Lanka. It is mainly imported from Singapore, Malaysia and South Korea.

The relevant committees, ministries concerned, fuel oil importers and distributors association, and the Petroleum Product Regulatory Department make hard efforts to sell the fuel as usual and release reference process daily and supervise to sell quality fuel at fairer prices.

Similarly, the Ministry of Commerce held a coordination meeting with the relevant committees, including the Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and



Distributors Association and fuel suppliers, to streamline the fuel importations yesterday and to sell the fuel unlimitedly within the boundary of reference prices at the fuel stations.

Due to instant efforts of departments and organizations,

fuel stations sold the fuel without any limitation starting yesterday evening. The private oil stations such as Denko, Myatmyittamon, Shwebyinephyu and BOC also released statements that they sell the fuel to the public as much as they want.

Moreover, Myanmar Fuel Oil Importers and Distributors Association releases daily fuel prices.

The world crude oil price was US\$113.04 yesterday, and the local fuel prices rose between K50 to K80 more than the ones on Monday. — Khin Yadana/GNLM

Union Minister Dr Pwint San discusses facilitation of fuel oil import, distribution



MOC virtually convened a co-ordination meeting on the facilitation of the fuel oil import and distribution process at the Ministry of Commerce meeting hall yesterday. Union Minister Dr Pwint San gave a remark.

The discussion focused on rumours spreading in the domestic market, setting a sales limit at retail stations and panic buying of consumers, importer companies and the departments concerned.

At the meeting, importer companies and those engaged in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) reported difficulties in the distribution network and current market conditions. Officials of the MoC discussed plans to lessen the worries of the people and the government support.

Importer companies agreed to ensure the unlimited distribution process at set reference rates to help consumers stop worrying.

MoC Deputy Minister U Nyunt Aung, the secretary of the Central Committee on Ensuring Smooth Flow of Trade and Goods, directors-general of relevant departments, officials of the Myanmar Petroleum Trade Association and representatives of importer companies attended the meeting. — MNA

Nay Pyi Taw ex-mayor Dr Myo Aung, former deputy chair of Nay Pyi Taw development committee U Ye Min Oo, ex-member U San Naing charged under anti-corruption law

THE Anti-Corruption Commission set up an investigation team into allegations against officials of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.

According to the findings of the investigation team, former Chairman of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee Mayor Dr Myo Aung and former Committee Member No. (5) U San Naing, during their tenure, spent more than K1,800 million on the sale of general plots of land by the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee in developing (96 plots of land and connection of water pipeline in Pobbathiri Township).

The State lost more than K1,800 million since they did not follow the directive of the President's Office No. 1/2017 and No. 126 (1)/8 of the President's Office issued on 4 May 2018 to pay the proceeds from the sale of state-owned lands to the State only.

The State also lost K1,170 million in public funds due to the land reclamation of 96 plots of land and connection of water pipeline in Nyanadipa Ward, Pobbathiri Township and 35 private plots near Htantabin Tawra Monastery in Dekkhinathiri Township by the former mayor, the committee member, which was not necessary for the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee.

The State also lost K50 million due to their permission of 0.75 acres of land on the Moethoutpan Road in Dekkhinathiri Township to a person to run a restaurant business without asking for a permit from the President's Office under Section 29 of the Nay Pyi Taw Development Law or without calling for expression of interest-EOI to the public to sell the land in transparency. They sold the land at K100 million with the decision made at the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee's Management meeting.

Similarly, former mayor Dr Myo Aung and deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo also sold more than five acres of land near the Nay Pyi Taw Myoma Market to a company to open a shopping mall at K100 million per acre under the decision made at the Nay Pyi Taw Development Committee's Management meeting. Therefore, the State lost about K2,000 million.

Due to the above findings, a file against former mayor Dr Myo Aung, former deputy mayor U Ye Min Oo and committee member No (5) U San Naing was filed under Section 55 of the Anti-Corruption Law at the No (1) Myoma Police Station of the Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory yesterday. — MNA

ASEAN-South Korea 2nd workshop on oceans, fisheries held



THE 2nd workshop on Oceans and Fisheries between South-east Asia and the Republic of Korea was held online yesterday afternoon. A Myanmar delegation led by Deputy Minister for Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Dr Aung Gyi participated in the discussion.

The workshop aimed to identify common areas of cooperation between senior officials of the participating countries to improve the marine environment and the development of sustainable fisheries sectors in the ASEAN region.

Deputy Minister Dr Aung Gyi elaborated that Myanmar would work together with member nations to avoid litter and pollution by maintaining a healthy marine environment and eradicating illegal fishing for the long-term sustainability of the fishery. It would also expand joint fisheries management in collaboration with local fishers in inshore waters, identify fish resources conservation zones in offshore fishing, protect fish habitats for an increase in fish resources, and develop saltwater aquaculture technologies and research.

The workshop was hosted by the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea and organized by the Korea Institute of Ocean Science and Technology. The workshop was attended by Deputy Minister for Oceans and Fisheries of South Korea Mr Sang Keun Song, officials from the ASEAN Secretariat, senior officials from the ASEAN member states, and ocean and fisheries researchers. — MNA

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LOCAL BUSINESS

Myanmar records import plunge in capital goods in past mini-budget period

ACCORDING to the construction market, the depreciation of the Kyat against the US dollar and a slowdown in the construction market dealt a blow to the import of capital goods.

Between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 of the past six-month mini-budget period, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines and steel, with an estimated import value of \$1.49 billion, were imported into the country. This figure was tremendously down by \$2.78 billion compared to the same corresponding period of the last financial year 2020-2021.

Additionally, the COVID-19 negative consequences shut down some foreign investment enterprises and the condominium property market relying on foreign expatriates plunged by 70 per cent. As a result, the realtors are forced to reduce the rents. The rental market continued a downward spiral amidst the



Between 1 October 2021 and 31 March 2022 of the past six-month mini-budget period, capital goods, such as auto parts, vehicles, machines and steel, with an estimated import value of \$1.49 billion, were imported into the country.

COVID-19 consequences and political changes. The occupancy is drastically declining, a realtor from Yangon elaborated.

However, the real estate market sees an upturn in house and land prices as some inves-

tors believe it is a haven asset during difficult times.

As Kyat depreciates on the US dollar, the construction costs have risen. Consequently, the developers are facing supply chain issues.

The construction sector imports steel, cement, electronic appliances, machinery, etc.

Meanwhile, three other import groups saw an increase. Myanmar imported consumer products worth over \$1.74 billion,

including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and palm oil. The imports of consumer products showed a slight increase of 125.5 million against the year-ago period.

Intermediate goods make up the largest share of Myanmar's imports, with the main imports of petroleum products and plastic raw materials. This year, imports of raw materials soared to \$3.573 billion from \$2.57 billion registered during the year-ago period.

During the same period, raw materials worth over \$1.14 billion were also imported for the Cut-Make-Pack (CMP) garment sector, showing a rise of \$329 million compared with the last financial year.

The top 10 import countries to Myanmar are China, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Viet Nam, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US, as per data of the Ministry of Commerce. — KK/GNLM

Long bean growers make profits under intercropping system



A female farm worker picks up the long beans.

THE prices of long beans are rising, and those growers who practise onion-long bean intercropping in Kyaukpadaung Township, Mandalay, are making profits during the harvest season, said U Tin Tun Aung, a grower from Legwa village, Kyaukpadaung Township.

The growers from most villages near Kyatmauktaung dam in Kyaukpadaung primar-

ily cultivate onions in an intercropping system. After the onions are harvested, they treat the long bean plants with fertilizer and provide adequate irrigation. As growers are worried about a poor yield of onions in intercropping, they provide sufficient water for the long beans only after the harvest season of onions.

The long beans fetch

K1,800 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) during the early season, whereas the price stands at K1,000 per viss during the abundant harvest season. As a result, the growers involved in the intercropping system are doing well financially, U Nay Myo Tun from Moatgon village explained.

Onions are worth only K500 per viss, while the long beans are offered K1,800-K2,000 per viss. The growers can cover the cultivation cost on account of the high prices of long beans.

The onion-long beans intercropping practices are found in Legwa, Nyaungpyupin, Letpanai, Gonte, Setpyarkyin, Moatgon, Kinmonchoan, Magyeetine and other villages in Kyaukpadaung Township.

After the long beans are harvested, the plants are utilized as the feedstuff for cattle. — Ko Htein(KPD)/GNLM

Kyaikmaraw durian, pomelo fetch high prices during harvest time

THE prices of durian and pomelo from Kyaikmaraw Township, Mon State, are escalating in the early time of harvest season, allowing the farm owners to earn handsome profits.

The durian and pomelo are abundantly harvested in April. There are two types of durians in the market: Thai durian and native durian varieties. Consumers mostly prefer Thai durian varieties due to their thick skin and richer taste. The prices of Thai varieties touched a high of K10,000-K30,000, while the prices of native durian varie-

ties are pretty low due to little flesh. Next, farm owners sell the pomelo at K3,000-4,000. Those farm owners who can harvest the fruits at present are doing well financially. I can pluck 200 pomelos and 100 durians at once, said U Kyaw Kyaw, a farm owner.

The growers lack foreign demand amid the pandemic. There are approximately 15,000 acres of pomelo acreage across the states and regions. However, pomelo can solely rely on the domestic market for now. — Cho Myat Myat Htwe (Kyaikmaraw)/GNLM



Minimize disposing of plastic waste in the environment

THE National Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan for Myanmar (2018-2030) adopted six visions for shaping a zero-waste society.

The strategy and the master plan adopted six goals: Extending sound waste collection service to all citizens and eliminating uncontrolled disposal and open burning as the first step towards environmentally sound waste management; Extending sustainable and ecologically sound management of industrial and other hazardous wastes; Substantively prevent waste through 3Rs and

thereby establish a circular resource society: Ensure sustainable financing mechanisms: Awareness raising, advocacy and capacity building, and Compliance, monitoring, enforcement and recognition.

Global people dispose of some 300 million metric tonnes per year; about a half of which is the single used products made of plastics. Plastic products can be recycled for new ones, but most of them are disposed of.

A few volumes of this waste can be incinerated. The majority of plastic waste is spreading across the environment, causing water and soil pollution due to the waste of plastic products.

According to reliable statistics, some eight million MT flow into the oceans on a yearly basis, threatening the life of water creatures. Fish may eat micro-plastic particles which come out from the decayed plastic products in the water. Again, humans may eat such kinds of fish. Consequently, the particles of micro-plastic products may reach the stomach of humans.

Myanmar is weak in waste management across the world, based on global statistics. Myanmar disposes of 0.46 million MT per year; some 0.1 million MT of which reaches the seas. As there are many weaknesses in policy, rules and regulations, budget and technology, Myanmar cannot secure the achievement in solving the problems and harmful impacts of disposing of the plastic waste.

As such, the government decided to draw the action plan of the National Waste Management Strategy and enhance the capacity for waste management during the period from 2021 to 2023 in order to polish the image of Myanmar in the international community.

Actually, the man who matters most is the best solution for solving all problems. High knowledge awareness of the people and their disciplinary acts plays a crucial role in the waste management measure. Only when the people raise their participation and cooperation in the reduction of using plastics, and recycling and reutilizing of plastic products, will the implementation of the Waste Management Strategy and Master Plan achieve success in the work process.



Sleep to reset our Brain and Body for Health

By – Mg. Han Tin

SLEEPING is a basic human need, like eating, drinking, and breathing. Sleep is the third pillar of good health, diet, and exercise. Sleeping is vital for good health and well-being throughout our lifetime. Sleep has an influence on metabolism and hormone production (including hormones that regulate appetite and satiety). Sleep allows both the body and brain to recover during the night. A good night's rest ensures that we'll feel refreshed and alert when we wake up in the morning. Sleep plays a vital role in our mental and physical well-being. Different processes that occur during sleep help to promote healthy brain activity and maintain good overall health. Sleep is also a key for proper growth and development for children and teenagers.

Sleep deprivation is a condition that occurs if we don't get enough sleep and sleep sessions are irregular or short. It is strongly linked to developing diseases and an overall increase in premature death (like smoking, a terrible diet, and not exercising enough.)

Sleep deficiency is a broader concept. It occurs if we have one or more of the following:

We don't get enough sleep (sleep deprivation).
We sleep at the wrong time of day.

We don't sleep well or get all the different types of sleep our body needs.

We have a sleep disorder that prevents us from getting enough sleep or causes poor-quality sleep.

Sleep deficiency will not only leave us feeling tired but can increase our risk for a wide range of diseases and health problems. Sleep deficiency is linked to many chronic physical and mental health problems, including heart disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, stroke, obesity, depression, bipolar disorder and even schizophrenia. Sleep deficiency can interfere with work, school, driving, and social functioning. We might have trouble learning, focusing, and reacting. Also, we might find it hard to judge other people's emotions and reactions. Sleep deficiency also can make us feel frustrated, quick-tempered, or worried in social situations.

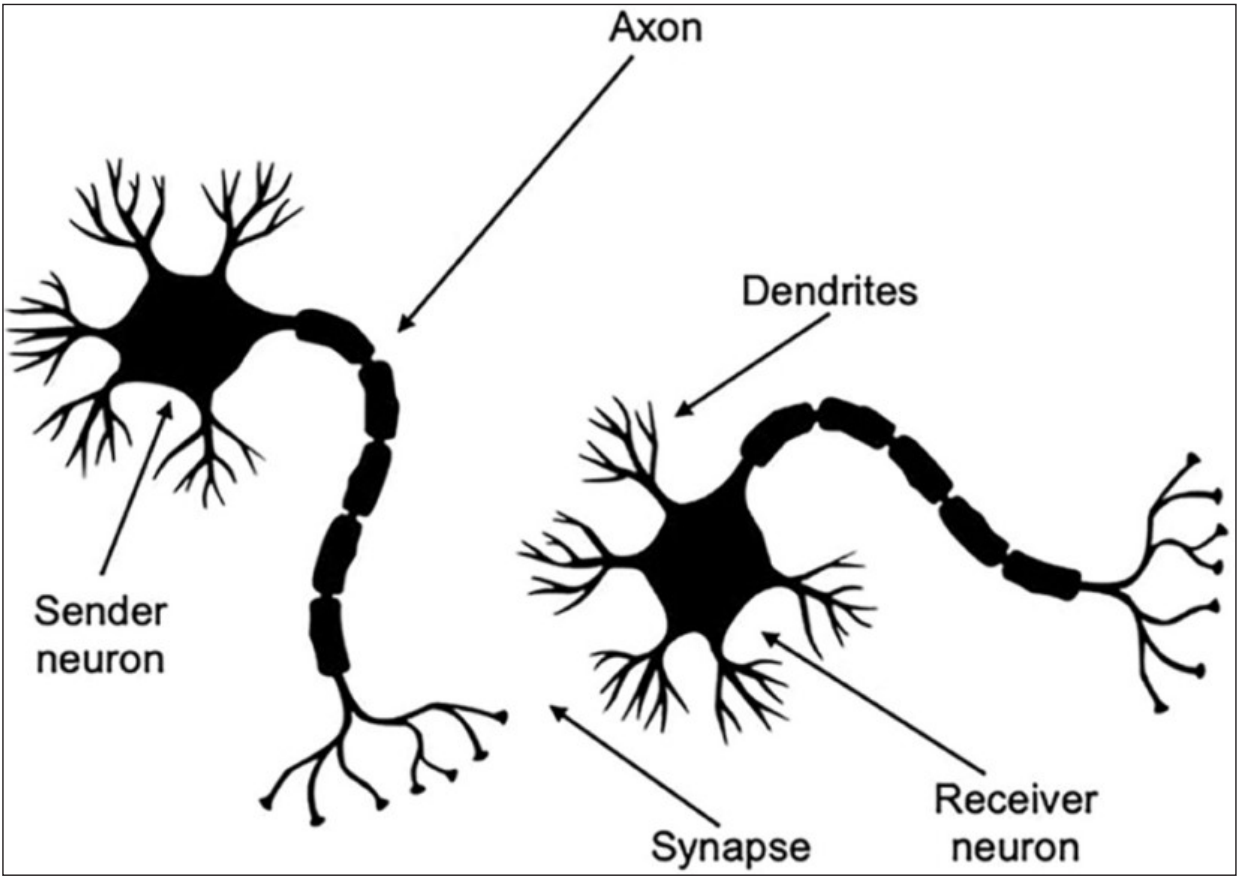
Poor sleep may have damaging effects on the brain, increasing the risk of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, and mood disorders like depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and anxiety. **Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)** is a psychiatric disorder characterized by an acute emotional response to a traumatic event or situation involving severe environmental stress, such as a natural disaster, aeroplane crash, serious automobile accident, military combat, or physical torture.

In the right conditions, the brain produces a signal that essentially tells the body's major systems – the heart, the lungs, the digestive system, the nervous system, even the muscles - that it's time to call for the day and quit. (In some people with chronic sleep problems, that critical signal isn't firing.) The brain and body need downtime to recuperate after the day's activity. Therefore, sleep is the single most effective thing we can do to reset our brain and body for health. While the body appears to rest during sleep, a whole lot is happening inside the brain. Neurons pulse with electrical signals that wash over the brain in a rhythmic flow. During the day, the brain uses energy resources to fire neurons. Our brain is made up of billions of cells called **neurons** (Electrical cells within the nervous system specialized in sending and receiving signals.) Our neurons carry information in the form of electrical pulses. Neurons communicate with

each other and the rest of our body at particular meeting points called **synapses** (Neuron communication junctions where vesicle (blisters) fusion releases chemical signals.)

Neurons send and receive electrical signals to communicate with each other in the nervous system and with other types of cells in the body, particularly muscles. At one end, neurons have branch-like projections called dendrites that allow them to receive signals. One neuron sends the signal (the sender neuron), and the other receives it (the receiver neuron). The long "trunk" of the neuron is called the axon, down which the long-distance electrical signal travels. At the end of the axon is a special

formance. However, napping doesn't supply all the other benefits of nighttime sleep, so we can't really make up for lost sleep. Some people sleep more on their days off than on workdays. They also may go to bed and wake up later on days off. Sleeping more on days off might be a sign that we aren't getting enough sleep. Although extra sleep on days off might help us feel better, it can upset our body's sleep-wake rhythm. Napping during the day may boost our alertness and performance. However, if we have trouble falling asleep at night, limit naps or take them earlier in the afternoon. Adults should nap for no more than 20 minutes.



The structure and function of a nerve cell (a "neuron")

communication junction called a synapse. The synapse links the end of the axon in one neuron to a dendrite in a second neuron. There is a very narrow space between the neurons through which a communication signal passes from the sender neuron to the receiver neuron.

At night, a switch turns on so the sleeping brain can take advantage of the metabolic downtime to do some cleaning up. All the while, brain cells contract, opening up the spaces between them so that fluid can wash out to clean out the brain, quite literally, of the toxic detritus (accumulating debris) that can cause all kinds of problems if it builds up. Without that nightly wash cycle, dangerous toxins can damage healthy cells and interfere with their ability to communicate with one another. In the short term, that can impede memory formation and the ability to coherently compose our thoughts and regulate our emotions. Over time, the consequences can be catastrophic. Lack of sleep can lead to faster ageing of brain cells, contributing to diseases like Alzheimer's.

If we regularly lose sleep or choose to sleep less than needed, the sleep loss adds up. The total sleep lost is called our **sleep debt**. For example, if we lose 2 hours of sleep each night, we'll have a sleep debt of 14 hours after a week. Some people nap to deal with sleepiness. Naps may give a short-term boost in alertness and per-

High-quality sleep (the deep, restorative kind of rest) can have a direct bearing (connection) on the health of those with mental illness. Sleep has some real biological benefits. We sleep to remember, and we sleep to forget. It is called overnight therapy. This type of processing takes time. It likely happens only during deep, quality sleep and over consistent nights of such sleep. Getting enough quality sleep at the right times can help protect our mental health, physical health, quality of life, and safety. The amount of sleep we need each day will change over the course of our life. Although sleep needs vary from person to person, the chart below shows general recommendations for different age groups.

Newborns 4 to 12 months	- 12 to 16 hours a day (including naps)
Children 1 to 2 years old	- 11 to 14 hours a day (including naps)
Children 3 to 5 years old	- 10 to 13 hours a day (including naps)
Children 6 to 12 years old	- 9 to 12 hours a day
Teens 13 to 18 years old	- 8 to 10 hours a day
Adults 18 years or older	- 7 to 8 hours a day

Getting a good night's sleep is incredibly important for our health. Indeed, it's just as important as eating a balanced, nutritious diet and exercising. Sleep deprivation can put our health and safety at risk, which is why it's essential for us to prioritize and protect our sleep on a daily basis. Sleep plays an important role in our physical health. Good-quality sleep:

1. **May help maintain or lose weight:** Prioritizing sleep may support healthy body weight. Short sleep duration is associated with an increased risk of developing obesity and weight gain. Sleep deprivation may increase our appetite and cause us to eat more calories. In particular, we're more likely to eat foods high in sugar and fat.
2. **Can improve concentration and productivity:** Sleep is vital for various aspects of brain function. Cognition, concentration, productivity, and performance are all negatively affected by sleep deprivation. Good sleep can maximize problem-solving skills and enhance memory. In contrast, poor sleep has been shown to impair brain function and decision making skills.
3. **Can maximize athletic performance:** Getting enough sleep has been shown to improve many aspects of athletic and physical performance.
4. **May strengthen our heart:** Sleep heals and repairs our heart and blood vessels. Sleeping fewer than seven hours per night is linked to an increased risk of heart disease and high blood pressure.
5. **Affects sugar metabolism (how our body reacts to insulin) and type2 diabetes risks:** Short sleep is associated with a greater risk of developing type2 diabetes and insulin resistance – which is when our body cannot use the hormone insulin properly. Sleep deficiency results in a higher-than-normal blood sugar level that may raise our risk of diabetes. Many studies show a strong association between chronic sleep deprivation and the risk of developing type2 diabetes.
6. **Helps support a healthy balance of the hormones that make us feel hungry (ghrelin) or full (leptin):** When we don't get enough sleep, our level of ghrelin goes up, and your level of leptin goes down. This makes us feel hungrier than when we're well-rested.
7. **Poor sleep is linked to depression:** Mental health concerns, such as depression, are strongly linked to poor sleep quality and sleeping disorders. Poor sleeping patterns are strongly linked to depression, particularly among those with a sleeping disorder.
8. **Supports a healthy immune system:** Ongoing sleep deficiency can change the way our body's natural defence against germs and sickness responds. For example, if we're sleep-deficient, we may have trouble fighting common infections. Getting at least 7 hours of sleep can improve our immune function and help fight the common cold.
9. **Poor sleep is linked to increased inflammation:** Poor sleep can have a major effect on inflammation in the body. Inflammation is the body's natural defence system against injury or invading microbes like bacteria and viruses. But inflammation can also become chronic, and that's when the real trouble starts. Chronic inflammation is a leading driver of many developing chronic conditions diseases, including some cancers, cognitive decline, heart

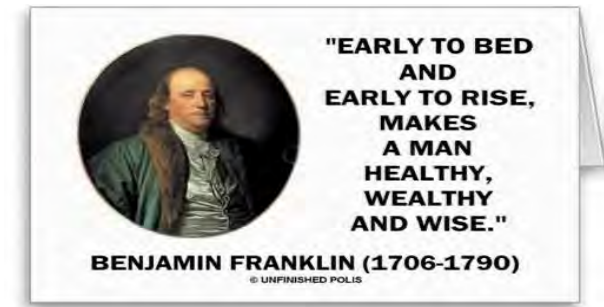
disease, Type2 diabetes, depression, Alzheimer's disease and chronic pain. One of the main drivers of chronic inflammation is not sleeping enough. Sleep disturbance is linked to higher levels of inflammation.

10. **Supports healthy growth and development:** Deep sleep triggers the body to release the hormone that promotes average growth in children and teens. This hormone also boosts muscle mass and helps repair cells and tissues in children, teens and adults. Sleep also plays a role in puberty and fertility.

Making time to sleep will help you protect your health and well-being now and in the future. To improve our sleep habits:-

- Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day. Try to keep the same sleep schedule on weeknights and weekends. Stick to a sleep schedule. Set aside no more than eight hours for sleep.
- Keep our bedroom quiet, cool, and dark.
- Limit daytime naps.
- Avoid nicotine (for example, cigarettes) and caffeine (including caffeinated soda, coffee, tea, and chocolate).
- Take a hot bath or use relaxation techniques before bed.
- Pay attention to what we eat and drink. Avoid heavy or oversized meals within a few hours of bedtime. But don't go to bed hungry or stuffed.
- Include physical activity in your daily routine.
- Manage worries.

There's still much about sleep that causes to feel puzzled scientists, particularly about what goes wrong for so many of us, night after night. We all - Think in the morning. Act in the noon. Eat in the evening. Sleep in the night. Sleep is that golden chain that ties health and our bodies together. Every one of us had heard about the Benjamin Franklin's early bedtime quote, "**Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise**". The mechanism for rising early is to have been well-rested by going to bed early. The saying emphasizes that someone who gets enough sleep and starts work early in the day will have a successful life.



"Our human brain really does like routine. Keep as close as possible to the same bedtime seven days a week. That is what the body clock expects."

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COVID-19 vaccine drive continues in various states, regions



A local in Yankin Township, Yangon gets a COVID-19 vaccine shot.

DOCTORS and nurses from public hospitals, Tatmadaw medical teams, healthcare workers and volunteers are working hard to give COVID-19 vaccines in different states and regions as the vaccination programme is one of the most important activities in the prevention, control and treatment of COVID-19 disease.

COVID-19 vaccine is administered daily to target groups regardless of race or religion, including Buddhist monks and nuns, local people over the age of 40, students, religious leaders, prisoners, people with disabilities, ethnic armed groups, people with chronic diseases, people in IDP camps and over 12-year-old students, respectively.

Yesterday, doctors and nurses from public hospitals, medical teams from Tatmadaw, relevant healthcare workers in collaboration with volunteers gave COVID-19 vaccines to 410 people from Yankin and Tamway townships in Yangon Region, 24,252 people from twenty six townships in Ayeyawady Region, 5,048 people from twelve townships in Rakhine and Chin states, 54,310 people from seven districts in Mandalay Region, 528 people from three townships in Bagon Region, respectively.

It is reported that officials from the respective Regional Military Headquarters visited the site and coordinated the necessary work. — MNA

MoC facilitates daily imports of essential anti-COVID-19 equipment

THE Ministry of Commerce oversees the importation of essential medical supplies and anti-COVID-19 devices critical to the COVID-19 prevention, control and treatment activities, through trading posts and international airports and seaports.

Twenty oxygen concentrators via the Muse 105-Mile Trading Zone and 39.2 tonnes of masks via the Chinshwehaw trading post were imported yesterday.

Officials from relevant departments cooperate to facilitate and expedite the standard operating procedures for the

import process.

It is reported that the Ministry of Commerce is coordinating with relevant departments to prevent COVID-19, and contact persons for enquiries can be reached through the Ministry's Website — www.commerce.gov.mm. — MNA



56 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 19 April, total figure rises to 612,658

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **612,658** after **56** new cases were reported on 19 April 2022 according to the Ministry of Health. Among these confirmed cases, **591,507** have been discharged from hospitals. Death toll stands at **19,434** without more casualties. —MNA

CRIME NEWS

Over 10 million stimulant pills seized on YGN-MDY Expressway

OVER 10 million of stimulant pills worth K15 billion were seized on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, according to the Myanmar Police Force.

Anti-drug police force stopped and searched a Prado vehicle driven by Zarni Tun from Mandalay to Yangon and another Prado car driven by Moe Hein and accompanied by Nyein Chan Thu (alias) Kyan Kyaung near the mile post 284/5 on the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway, Meiktila Township, Mandalay Region at 1 pm on 13 April.

According to the investigation, 10 million ecstasy pills worth K15 billion were confiscated from two vehicles as the drugs were transported from Mandalay Region to Yangon Region.

They are prosecuted and perpetrators are still under investigation, according to the Police Force. —MNA



Three arrestees are seen along with seized drugs and vehicles.

Illegal teak, utensils and vehicles seized this week

SUPERVISED by the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee, effective action is being taken to prevent illicit trades under the law.

A joint inspection team led by the Bago Region Forest Department conducted an inspection under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Toungoo, Pyay and Thayawady districts and 47.8792 tonnes of hardwood and other timbers (estimated at K7,721,660) were seized.

On 19 April, 1.7540 tonnes of illegal teak were also seized in forest reserves of Toungoo and Pyay districts (approximately K251,600) and action was taken under the Forest Law.

Similarly, an investigation team led by the Myanmar Police conducted an investigation under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in the Sagaing Region on 18 April.

Next, one unregistered Toyota Landcruiser car (estimated at K3 million) in Shwebo Township was seized, and action was taken under the Import and Export Law.

On 19 April, a joint inspection team conducted a search operation under the management of the Customs Department at the Mayanchaung Permanent Checkpoint.

A motorcycle battery (estimated at K2,400,000) was seized from a passenger van with no official documents, and action was taken under the Customs Law.

Similarly, joint inspections led by the Anti-Illegal Trade Committee conducted inspections under the management of the Anti-Illegal Trade Task Force in Muse District, Shan State.

Afterwards, undocumented consumer goods (estimated at K192,404,531) and five 12-wheeler trucks carrying these items (estimated at K110,000,000) and (approximately K302,404,531 in total) were arrested near the Thein Than Kyi Highway Terminal and Shwethamin Golf Course in Muse.

As a result, 18 arrests (approximately K315,777,791) were made on 18 and 19 April, according to the Anti-Illegal Trade Steering Committee. —MNA

NEWS IN BRIEF

India slams WHO over report claiming 4 million Covid deaths



A pedestrian walks past a wall mural depicting health workers wearing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) suits to spread awareness about the Covid-19 coronavirus in Mumbai on 29 January 2022. PHOTO: PUNIT PARANJPE / AFP

INDIA has sharply criticized a forthcoming World Health Organization study which reportedly claims coronavirus killed four million people nationally, the latest analysis suggesting a significant undercount of the pandemic's death toll.

The New York Times reported last week that New Delhi had stalled the study's release after disputing that India's true fatality count was eight times higher than official figures.

The conclusion matches similar figures by the Lancet last month and a February study in the journal Science that calculated a Covid death toll of at least 3.2 million.

But India's health ministry said in a weekend statement that the WHO's mathematical modelling of the pandemic was "questionable" and "statistically unproven". —AFP

Italian PM tests positive for COVID-19

ITALY'S Prime Minister Mario Draghi has tested positive for COVID-19, the government said in a statement on Monday.

Draghi, 74, who is fully vaccinated, "is asymptomatic", according to the statement.

His schedule has been curtailed, including a planned trip to Angola and the Republic of the Congo scheduled for 20-21 April. The statement said Draghi will be replaced by Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio and Ecological Transition Minister Roberto Cingolani for the trip. —Xinhua

No need to stop social activities with Omicron: Japan COVID adviser

JAPAN'S top coronavirus adviser has said the country no longer needs to "fully" stop social activities, as symptoms of the currently dominant Omicron variant are less severe than those of previous strains, in a major shift from his previous stance focusing on strict controls to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Shigeru Omi said in an interview with Kyodo News that Japan's coronavirus situation has entered a new phase and there is no more need to take measures such as shutting down schools and department stores as the government did in April 2020 when the country's first COVID-19 state of emergency was declared.

"We probably no longer need an option like fully stopping social activities," Omi said, adding that people have learned how to cope with the virus after more than two years of the pandemic.

"It's hard to gain public understanding and cooperation if we continue to focus on measures just to reduce the number of infected people," he said. —Kyodo

Boris Johnson to face MPs' fury over 'partygate'

BRITISH Prime Minister Boris Johnson will face angry lawmakers Tuesday for the first time since being fined for breaking the law, as the "partygate" scandal continues to plague him.

The embattled UK leader has weathered the initial storm after being penalized last week for breaching Covid lockdown laws on one occasion in 2020, doggedly defying calls to resign.

But Johnson can expect a bruising few days as the House of Commons returns from its Easter break, with MPs demanding to know why he repeatedly insisted to them that no rules had been broken.

Knowingly misleading parliament is a breach of government ministers' code of conduct, which states they should resign as a result, and opposition lawmakers are adamant he should go.

However, despite becoming

the first modern British leader to be fined for law-breaking and facing further possible penalties as police investigate numerous rules-breaching events in Downing Street, he is digging in.

The 57-year-old will reportedly try to sideline the controversy with a "business as usu-

al" mantra this week, which includes a two-day visit to India starting Thursday.

"The prime minister will have his say... and will outline his version of events and face questions from MPs," government minister Greg Hands told Sky News Monday. —AFP



Demonstrators outside the House of Commons in London where Boris Johnson apologized for a lockdown party. PHOTO: AFP

Chinese scientists find molecular pathway for critical COVID-19 cases

AN international team led by Chinese researchers has identified a molecular pathway that intensifies the severity of critical COVID-19 cases, lending clues to potential treatment for such cases.

The study published on Wednesday in the journal Science Signaling showed that the fusion of coronavirus-infected lung cells may exacerbate inflammatory

responses, thus triggering immune signaling cascades in the lungs, which are a major driver of lung damage in patients with severe disease. Scientists from the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences and Peking Union Medical College and their collaborators analyzed postmortem patient samples. They found the correlation between critical COVID-19 cases and the fusion of lung epi-

thelial cells called pneumocytes, which has also been observed in macaques and cultured cells infected with the virus.

Then, they examined human embryonic kidney cells that either expressed the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 that causes COVID-19 or were infected with vesicular stomatitis virus carrying the spike protein.

The kidney cells ended up fusing and formed new cells with multiple nuclei and tiny micronuclei, which triggered a DNA sensor in the cell liquids, and the sensor in turn recruited a protein that activates the expression of genes encoding type I interferons which would be expected to further support inflammatory signalling, according to the study.

"Our data suggest a mechanism by which fused pneumocytes in the lungs of patients with COVID-19 may enhance the production of interferons and other cytokines, thus exacerbating disease severity," said Liu Xiaoman, the paper's co-first author. —Xinhua



Medical workers take swab samples from residents for nucleic acid test at a community in Liwan District of Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, 9 April 2022. PHOTO: XINHUA/DENG HUA

ECONOMY WORLD

China economy accelerates in Q1 but virus stalks outlook

CHINA'S economic growth accelerated in the first quarter of the year to 4.8 per cent, official data showed Monday, but the government warned of "significant challenges" ahead while massive Covid-19 lockdowns started to bite.

The world's second-biggest economy had lost steam in the latter half of last year with a property slump and regulatory crackdowns, pulling down growth.

But it exceeded expectations in the first three months of 2022, growing 4.8 per cent on-year, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said, with Lunar New Year spending and factory production cajoling growth.

The weeks ahead, however, appear treacherous for the economy with Beijing's unrelenting zero-Covid approach to outbreaks clogging supply chains and locking down tens of millions of people — including in the economic dynamos of Shanghai and Shenzhen as well as the northeastern grain



A labourer works at a workshop of AE (Tianjin) Automotive Equipment Co., Ltd. in Tianjin, north China, 14 February 2021. **PHOTO: XINHUA/SUN FANYUE/FILE**

basket of Jilin.

Virus restrictions in March have already gouged at retail sales, as consumers shied away from shopping, and drove up unemployment.

"With the domestic and international environment becoming increasingly complicated and uncertain, economic development is facing significant difficulties and challenges," NBS spokesman Fu Linghui said on

Monday.

The pandemic rebound — as well as the sanctions binding Russia's economy — ups the ante on officials to deliver Beijing's full-year growth target of around 5.5 per cent.

The target comes in a pivotal political year for President Xi Jinping who is eyeing another term in power at the Party Congress to be held this autumn. — AFP

Mexican president pushes lithium bill after energy reform setback



'Don't sell out the nation' reads a sign held by a supporter of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador at a rally in favour of proposed electricity sector reforms outside Congress. **PHOTO: AFP**

MEXICAN President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said Monday that his administration will push for a new mining law to reserve lithium exploitation to the state, after lawmakers rejected his proposed electricity reform bill.

During his daily press conference, Lopez Obrador explained that a state company would exploit, extract, process, industrialize and sell lithium, whose price has been soaring lately.

"We are going to protect

Mexico's lithium, the lithium of our generation and future generations, our children and grandchildren," he told journalists from the National Palace in Mexico City.

On Sunday, legislators in the Chamber of Deputies failed to approve the president's electricity reform, which sought to strengthen the state-owned Federal Electricity Commission, among other things.

Lopez Obrador estimated that the same lower house of Congress could discuss his mining bill as early as Monday.

Mexico has large lithium deposits, but lacks the resources to exploit them, according to the government.

The metal is considered the "new oil" due to its widespread use, especially in the manufacturing of batteries for electric vehicles and telephone equipment. — Xinhua

WORLD ECONOMY **Brief**

World Bank expects debt crisis to continue to worsen in 2022

DUE to high debt and deficit levels, countries are "under severe financial stress," and the debt crisis is expected to "continue to worsen" in 2022, World Bank Group President David Malpass said on Monday.

Noting that debt is one of the two big problems facing global growth, Malpass said at a Spring Meetings media roundtable that 60 per cent of low-income countries are already in debt distress or at high risk of it. Debt crises and currency depreciations have a burden that "falls heavily on the poor", he said.

The 2022 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group are set to take place from Monday, 18 April, through Sunday, 24 April. — Xinhua

Moroccan MPs call for cap on oil firms' profit margins

MOROCCAN lawmakers on Monday called for a cap on oil firms' profit margins, describing them as "exorbitant" amid soaring fuel prices in the wake of the Ukraine war.

During a plenary session with Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch — himself the owner of the main fuel distributor in the kingdom — lawmakers accused the government of a "conflict of interests" and of profiting from recent events.

Morocco, which relies on imports for its fuel consumption, has suffered from the skyrocketing prices of fuel and other basic goods since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. — AFP

Spanish government to downgrade growth forecasts: PM



People withdraw money at an ATM counter in Madrid, Spain, 31 March 2022. **PHOTO: GUSTAVO VALIENTE/XINHUA**

SPANISH government would lower its predictions for economic growth in 2022 from the 7 per cent rise in the gross domestic product (GDP) that was previously expected, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said on Monday.

The conflict in Ukraine had affected expectations for the economy, Sanchez told local TV network Antenna 3, insisting growth would still be "robust". The conflict in Ukraine "is having an impact on the Spanish and European economy," and there will be a downward revision in Spain, Europe and the world, he said.

"That does not mean that we are not going to grow," he added.

The prime minister highlighted that over 20 million people in Spain are currently affiliated to the country's social security system. However, he admitted there were "threats and risks", to the economy, such as the effect of the Ukraine conflict on inflation.

The rate of inflation in Spain stood at 9.8 per cent in March, according to the country's statistical office. — Xinhua

Japanese firms hit by COVID lockdown in Shanghai

THE coronavirus lockdown in Shanghai is forcing Japanese retailers to halt operations in the Chinese commercial and financial hub, while Japanese manufacturers have also been affected including through supply-chain disruptions.

With the city locked down in line with Beijing's radical zero-COVID policy amid an increase in infections, Ryohin Keikaku Co., the operator of retail brand Muji, had closed about 50 of its over 300 stores in China as of last week.

"We expect (the performance) in the second half of the business year (from March) to fall significantly below our forecast," President Nobuo Domae said Thursday. The company revised downward

its earnings forecast for its business year through August, citing the adverse impact on its business in China.

Clothing retail giant Fast Retailing Co. had closed all 86 outlets of its Uniqlo clothing chain and eight stores of its GU casual brand in Shanghai as of Thursday.

Tadashi Yanai, chairman and CEO, told reporters on Thursday that the company has been "troubled significantly in terms of revenue and from the standpoint of employees' daily lives."

Convenience store operator Lawson Inc. was forced to close 80 to 90 per cent of its around 1,000 stores in Shanghai.

Among manufactur-



A lockdown continues in Shanghai on 6 April 2022, to curb coronavirus infections. PHOTO: KYODO

ers, Sony Group Corp., Mitsubishi Electric Corp. and Sharp Corp. have suspended operations at factories in the city for extended periods of time.

Operations in Japan have been affected too due to delays in parts procurements from suppliers

in Shanghai. Mazda Motor Corp. shut down two plants in Japan for a total of eight days this month, while Mitsubishi Motors Corp.

suspended operations at a major factory in Aichi Prefecture for five days from 11 April.

Japan Airlines Co. and All Nippon Airways Co. said some cargo flights on the Shanghai route have been cancelled due to the difficulty of securing mechanics or staff who can load and unload their planes. Japan has been shipping semiconductors to Shanghai while importing electronic components from the Chinese city.

"As long as (China) sticks to its policy of conducting lockdowns, the impact on the (Japanese) economy will become more serious," said Kengo Sakurada, who leads the Japan Association of Corporate Executives.—Kyodo

Shares in Chinese pharma firm tank as Covid medicine questioned



Shanghai authorities have joined their Hong Kong counterparts in handing out 'Lianhua Qingwen' — a herbal remedy marketed for fever and sore throats — as the cities battle their worst Covid-19 outbreaks since the pandemic's start. Photo taken on 28 February 2021 shows the traditional Chinese medicine Lianhua Qingwen Capsules at a pharmacy in Kuwait City, Kuwait. PHOTO: ASAD/XINHUA

SHARES in one of China's largest traditional medicine producers plunged on Monday after reports

questioned the efficacy of pills approved by the government as a coronavirus treatment.

Shanghai authorities have joined their Hong Kong counterparts in handing out 'Lianhua Qingwen' — a herbal remedy marketed for fever and sore throats — as the cities battle their worst Covid-19 outbreaks since the pandemic's start.

But on Sunday, popular Chinese health platform Dingxiang Yisheng said the capsules, made by Shijiazhuang Yiling Pharmaceutical, could not prevent cases of the virus, in a report then picked up by state media.

Monday's share dump sent them falling to 32.39 yuan (\$5) with the stocks hitting the daily limit of 10 per cent on the Shenzhen exchange. Last week, Wang Sicong, an influencer and son of one of China's wealthiest scions, ignited debate about the drug on Weibo when he reposted a social media video questioning whether the World Health Organization had ever recommended it for use against Covid-19.—Xinhua

Heavyweight enterprises in Shanghai resume operations amid COVID-19 resurgence

ON Monday evening, workers at Quanta Shanghai Manufacturing City in the Songjiang comprehensive bonded zone were busy packing newly assembled laptops to be sent to the airport.

It was the first batch of products shipped by Quanta after work resumed following the latest outbreak in the city, and these laptops will appear on the US market in four days. The shipment of lap-

tops is expected to reach 59,000 units by 22 April, according to Li Kwok-sui from Quanta Shanghai Manufacturing City.

The resurgence of COVID-19 cases since March has taken Shang-

hai's manufacturing industry by surprise. As of Sunday, Shanghai has reported over 300,000 infections. Some enterprises have suffered setbacks in production and operations.—Xinhua

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE
M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (210W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V MAERSK NORBERG VOY.NO. (210W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **20-4-2022** 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.
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East Timor heads to polls to pick next president

EAST Timor’s citizens head to the polls on Tuesday to choose either a Nobel laureate or a former guerrilla fighter — the incumbent president — as their next leader.

Polling stations in Southeast Asia’s youngest country open at 7 am (2200 GMT Monday) for what is a rematch of a 2007 election won handily by former revolutionary hero and peace prize winner Jose Ramos-Horta.

Nearly 860,000 people in the country of just 1.3 million are eligible to vote, and ballot counting could take several days.

Ramos-Horta also earned a dominant win in this election’s first round on 19 March, win-

ning 46 per cent of votes versus President Francisco “Lu-Olo” Guterres’ 22 per cent, but failing to secure the needed majority.

Participation across the nation reached 77 per cent as voters chose between 16 candidates, a record high number.

The winner will take office for five years from 20 May — the day East Timor celebrates the 20th anniversary of its independence from Indonesia, which occupied the former Portuguese colony for 24 years.

The election is seen as a chance to reset a political deadlock between the two main parties: the National Congress of the Reconstruction of Timor-Leste



Jose Ramos-Horta was a critical figure in East Timor’s independence struggle. **PHOTO: VALENTINO DARIELL DE SOUSA/ AFP/FILE**

(CNRT) and Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor (Fretilin).

Guterres, 67, a former guerrilla fighter, is the Fretilin party president and was elected as the

country’s leader in 2017 with the support of former rebel Xanana Gusmao, the country’s first president and current CNRT leader.

But this time Gusmao and his party chose to nominate Ramos-Horta, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 for his efforts towards a peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor and was the main spokesperson of the independence movement.

The 72-year-old, who came out of retirement to challenge Guterres, served as the country’s first prime minister before his presidential term from 2007 to 2012. He survived an assassination attempt in 2008.— AFP

Syrian war drama makes TV breakthrough on Saudi-owned channel



Syrian actors Yazan Al-Khalil (second left) and Abbas Al-Nouri (left) perform a scene for the Syrian Social series in Ashrafieh Al-Wadi, in the Wadi Barada suburb of Damascus. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

BREAKING a decade-old boycott by Gulf broadcasters over a diplomatic standoff with the Damascus government, a Syrian war drama figures this month on the Ramadan menu of a Saudi-owned television channel.

Syrian dramas have long been popular across the region, but since Arab states in the Gulf suspended ties with President Bashar al-Assad’s government in 2012, broadcasters in the region have shied away from Syr-

ian-produced shows, especially those related to war. Syrian actors, however, have still found their way on to screens through pan-Arab productions and historical dramas produced by Gulf networks, such as the popular Bab al-Harra series. But shows made exclusively by Syrians were largely shunned. In a sign of change, the Saudi-owned MBC channel has started airing a Syrian-made series, “Suspension”, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan — a period that this year started 2 April and during which viewership peaks across the Middle East.

The Arabic-language show shot outside Damascus is “the first social drama made entirely by Syrians to air on a Saudi-owned TV channel since 2011”, when the country’s war erupted, said director Seif Elsbei.— AFP

Israel hits Gaza after rocket attack as Jerusalem tensions spike

ISRAEL carried out its first air strikes on the Gaza Strip in months early Tuesday in response to a rocket fired from the Palestinian enclave as tensions soar after a weekend of violence around a Jerusalem holy site.

Warning sirens sounded in southern Israel Monday night after the rocket was fired from the

enclave controlled by the Islamist group Hamas, the first such incident since early January.

The projectile crashed into the sea off Tel Aviv.

“One rocket was fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory. The rocket was intercepted by the Iron Dome Air Defense System,” the Israeli military said

in a statement.

Hours later the Israeli air force said it had hit a Hamas weapons manufacturing site in retaliation. Hamas claimed to have used its “anti-aircraft defence” to counter the air raids, which caused no casualties, according to witnesses and security sources in Gaza.—AFP

NEWS IN BRIEF

Three hurt in brazen Brazil robbery attempt

About 30 would-be robbers armed with machine guns terrorized a small Brazilian city overnight Sunday to Monday, injuring two police officers and a bystander in a brazen but ultimately failed assault on an armoured cash van, authorities said.

The attackers fled empty-handed after an intense exchange of gunfire with police in the southern town of Guarapuava, and a manhunt complete with tracking dogs and helicopters was underway Monday.

Video of the assault posted on social media showed residents of Guarapuava cowering amid a deafening hail of gunfire, while other recordings appeared to show the attackers using hostages as human shields in their getaway attempt.

Two police officers were wounded: one shot in the face and the other in a leg, officials said. Neither was critical.

A resident of the town was also hurt, but no details were provided.

Police said the would-be robbers set vehicles on fire at several strategic points around the city of 183,000 people, including at the police station, in a bid to slow the security response to their attack. —AFP

China to intensify crackdown on telecom, internet fraud

CHINESE central authorities have issued a set of guidelines to crack down on fraud involving telecommunication and the internet.

China will step up efforts to fight the whole criminal chain of telecom and internet fraud, and will enhance international cooperation to hunt down and extradite fugitives involved in these crimes, per the document jointly released by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council. The authorities will make all efforts to retrieve money acquired by fraud rings, it said.

Technology should be used against the websites, apps and short messages used by fraud rings, and to enable law enforcement agencies to identify potential victims more precisely.

Awareness campaigns will be devised to better equip the public to identify fraud schemes, according to the document.—Xinhua

Russia-Ukraine Conflict Latest developments

Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine:

Russia claims arms depot hit

RUSSIA'S army says it has destroyed a large depot of foreign weapons recently delivered to Ukraine near the western city of Lviv – one of 16 Ukrainian military sites it claims to have destroyed on Monday.

Russian planes in the morning struck a logistics centre holding “large batches of foreign weaponry, delivered to Ukraine over the past six days by the United States and European countries”, and “destroyed” them, says Russian defence ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov.

Putin honours Bucha-linked brigade

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin bestows an honorary title on Bucha-linked brigade in a decree that gives the 64th Motor Rifle Brigade the title of “Guards” for defending the “Motherland and state interests” and praises the “mass heroism and valour, tenacity and courage” of its members.

Russia pursuing objective to ‘liberate’ east Ukraine

RUSSIA'S defence minister on Tuesday said Moscow was seeking to “liberate” east Ukraine, but accused the West of dragging out the military operation by supplying Kyiv with arms. “We are gradually implementing our plan to liberate the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics,” Sergei Shoigu said in reference to eastern Ukraine's rebel regions, adding that Washington and its allies were trying to “drag out” the campaign through their weapons supplies.

Source: AFP

Sri Lanka leader trims cabinet of relatives ahead of IMF talks



Protesters shout slogans during an ongoing anti-government demonstration near the president's office in Colombo on 18 April 2022, demanding President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation over the country's crippling economic crisis. PHOTO: AFP

SRI Lanka's embattled leader dropped two of his brothers and a nephew from his cabinet Monday, following public anger over the ruling family's mismanagement of a crippling economic crisis and calls for his resignation.

President Gotabaya Ra-

japaksa has presided over the island nation's most painful downturn in memory and his government is preparing for imminent bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund.

Dozens of lawmakers have turned against the adminis-

tration and opposition parties have rebuffed invitations to join a unity government from the president, who insists he will remain in office to guide Sri Lanka through the crisis.

Huge protests have nonetheless demanded Rajapaksa stand down, including tens of thousands of people camped outside his seafront office for more than a week.

The new cabinet retains Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gotabaya's older brother and the head of Sri Lanka's ruling clan, while leaving out eldest sibling Chamal and younger brother Basil, the former finance minister.

Mahinda's eldest son Nimal, who ran the sports ministry and had been touted as a future leader before the crisis, was also dropped.—AFP

Iran blames US for delays to revive nuclear deal

IRAN on Monday said an agreement with world powers to revive the 2015 nuclear deal was still not in sight, blaming the United States for the delay. “More than one issue is still pending between Iran and the United States,” Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said. “Messages (from Wash-

ington) sent through (European Union coordinator Enrique) Mora these past weeks... are far from providing solutions that could lead to an accord,” he told reporters. Iran has been engaged in efforts to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) with Britain, China, France, Germany and

Russia directly, and the United States indirectly since April 2021.

Mora, who coordinates the indirect US-Iran talks, visited Tehran last month for talks with Iranian officials, and later went to Washington. At the time, Mora said he hoped to close the gaps remaining in the arduous negotiations.—AFP

UN seeks humanitarian contact group for Ukraine



A volunteer walks by a vehicle labelled ‘volunteers’, carrying medicines to civilians who are trapped in Mariupol. PHOTO: AFP /FADEL SENNA

UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths announced Monday that he will meet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey this week to push for the creation of a “humanitarian contact group” involving Ukraine and Russia.

Such a group would “meet convened by the UN to discuss on a virtual or actual basis at any time to discuss humanitarian issues,” Griffiths told reporters in New York.

That could include ceasefire monitoring, safe passage, humanitarian corridors or other issues between the two warring sides, he said. Griffiths did not say when he would meet Erdogan, but said he planned to arrive in Turkey on Wednesday and leave Thursday.

He and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres spoke with Erdogan by phone Sunday to dis-

cuss the initiative.

Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February and since then has been repeatedly accused of targeting civilians. Aid agencies have warned of the need to protect and evacuate civilians in the conflict.

Griffiths had visited Moscow in early April before a trip to Kyiv, to try to obtain a humanitarian ceasefire and facilitate other aid interventions. Last week, however, Guterres admitted that a halt to the fighting seemed unlikely — and on Monday, Griffiths confirmed that Moscow was “not putting local ceasefires at the top of their agenda. Not yet.”

Ukraine has agreed to most of the UN's humanitarian proposals, but not Russia yet, he said, warning that it was too easy for the two sides to “blame each other when it goes wrong.”—AFP

Russian forces start battle for Donbas: Ukrainian president

RUSSIAN forces have begun the battle for the Donbas region, but Ukraine will defend itself, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a video address on Monday.

“Now we can say that Russian troops have started the battle for Donbas, for which they have been preparing for a long time. A very large part of the entire Russian army is now focused on this offensive,” Zelensky was

quoted as saying by the state-run Ukrinform news agency.

“No matter how many Russian troops are driven there, we will fight,” he added.

In the east and south of Ukraine, Russian forces have recently been trying to attack a little more deliberately than before and looking for a weak spot in the country's defense to go there with the main forces, Zelensky said.—Xinhua

Sri Lanka leader trims cabinet of relatives ahead of IMF talks

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SPORT

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.

Myanmar to play Thailand today in NSDF Futsal Invitation Championship 2022

MYANMAR women's national futsal team will take on the Thai national team today in the opening match of the NSDF Futsal Invitation Championship 2022 hosted by Thailand.

The match will start at 1:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time.

On the same day, Australian South Perth Team will also play against the Thai All-Stars Team at 3:30 pm Myanmar Standard Time.

Goalkeepers Khaing Nhin Thant, Nwe Nwe Soe, Chaw Sandi Aung, and players: Aye Aye Htwe, Nang Mokham, Win Win Khaing, Khin Mar Lin, Aye Nyein Thu, Phyu Phyu Kyaw, Nang Hon Hlaing, Zin Moe Pyae, May Zin Oo, Lar Al Wah, Yamin Lwin and Yoon Mi Mi Lwin will be in the player's list. The tourney's group matches will be held on 20, 21, 23, 24, and 26 April.

The Thai National Team,

Thai All-Stars Team, Myanmar National Team, Indonesian national team, and the Australian club South Perth Team participate in the tournament with a round-robin format.

According to the fixtures, the Myanmar team will next play against the Thai All-Stars team on 23 April, the Indonesian national team on 24 April, and the Australian club South Perth on 26 April. —Ko Nyi Lay/GNLM



Myanmar Futsal Team take a special training ahead of the NSDF Futsal Invitation Championship 2022 in Thailand. **PHOTO: MFF**

Barca's top-four finish in danger after shock defeat by Cadiz



Lucas Perez scored the winner as Cadiz beat Barcelona on Monday. **PHOTO: AFP**

BARCELONA'S place in La Liga's top four looks much less secure after they suffered a surprise 1-0 defeat at home to relegation-battling Cadiz on Monday.

Lucas Perez's close-range finish early in the second half condemned Barca to a second

consecutive defeat, on the back of their shock exit at the hands of Eintracht Frankfurt in the Europa League on Thursday.

Barcelona stayed second but are level on points with both Sevilla in third and Atletico Madrid in fourth while Real Betis in fifth are only three points behind. Xavi Hernandez's team do have a game in hand over the trio below them. But the loss means Barca have won only one of their last four matches, that victory coming via an injury-time winner against 19th-placed Levante. Any hopes they had of making leaders Real Madrid feel uncomfortable are surely over, with Madrid 15 points clear at the top, having played a game more. —AFP

Robredo retires after defeat in Barcelona

FORMER world number five Tommy Robredo played the last match of his career on Monday, losing 6-1, 6-1 to Bernabe Zapata Miralles at the Barcelona Open.

Robredo, who made his professional debut in Barcelona in 1999 and lifted the title in 2004, had announced he would retire after playing at his home tournament this week.

The 39-year-old won 12 ATP titles and knocked Roger Federer out of the US Open in 2013. He reached seven grand slam quarter-finals. Zapata Miralles, ranked 119th in the world, proved too strong for his fellow Spaniard, winning in just over an hour. Italy's Lorenzo Musetti continued his excellent start to the clay-court season by beating Argentinian Sebastian Baez 7-5, 7-5, to reach the second round.

Musetti defeated world number nine Felix Auger-Aliassime in Monte-Carlo last week.

American Brandon Nakashima also progressed. He beat Spanish qualifier Nicolas Alvarez Varona 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 and will face second seed Casper Ruud in round two. —AFP