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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Martial Law Order 1/2021

2nd Waxing of Tabaung 1382 ME
14 March 2021

1. In order to effectively provide security, the rule of law and community peace, the State Administration Council has transferred the executive and judicial power (Martial Law) to the Commander of the Yangon Command to exercise the martial law in the Hlinethaya Township and Shwepyitha Township of the Yangon Region under the Yangon Command in accordance with Article 419 of the Constitution.
2. Depending on changing situation in the region, the commander shall exercise the Martial Law by himself or shall transfer the power to the regional military commanders.

By order

Aung Lin Dway
Lieutenant-General
Secretary
State Administration Council

Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets military personnel and families, encourages military and civilian patients in PyinOoLwin

VICE-CHAIRMAN of the State Administration Council Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Commander-in-Chief (Army) Vice-Senior General Soe Win met officer trainees, permanent officers and other ranks and their families at the local battalion and the Defence Services Technological Academy (DSTA) in PyinOoLwin Township separately yesterday morning.

Also present were Lt-Gen Aung Zaw Aye of the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army), senior military officers from the Office of the Commander-in-Chief (Army, Navy and Air) and the Commander of Central Command. At the meetings, the Vice-Senior General explained details about handover of the State duty to the Tatmadaw in accord

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Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party are encouraging one of the military and civilian patients at PyinOoLwin military hospital yesterday.

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Announcement of Union Election Commission

14 March 2021

- Regarding the Multiparty General Election held on 8 November 2020, the Union Election Commission has inspected the voter lists and the casting of votes of Lanmadaw, Latha and Mayangon townships in Yangon Region.
- According to the inspection findings, the previous election commission released 34,044 eligible voters in Lanmadaw Township of Yangon Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 23,544 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 625 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 6 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times and 754 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
- The previous election commission released 17,863 eligible voters in Latha Township of Yangon Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 20,391 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 149 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, and 188 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
- The previous election commission released 158,898 eligible voters in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region. The list of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population in November 2020 showed 101,475 eligible voters who had turned 18. The voter lists mentioned that there were 9,768 citizens, associate citizens, nationalized citizens, and non-identity voters, 24 persons repeated on the voter lists more than three times holding one CSC and 2,078 persons repeated on the voter lists two times.
- Findings were as follows:

Findings on voter lists of respective township

| Sr | Township and numbers of polling stations | Township sub-commission | List from Immigration department | Those involved in voting list without citizenship scrutiny cards | Those involved in voter list more than three times holding one CSC | Those involved in voter list more than two times holding one CSC |
|----|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | 22 polling stations in Lanmadaw Township of Yangon Region | 34,044 | 23,544 | 625 | 6 | 754 |
| 2 | 18 polling stations in Latha Township of Yangon Region | 17,863 | 20,391 | 149 | - | 188 |
| 3 | 121 polling stations in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region | 158,898 | 101,475 | 9,768 | 24 | 2,078 |

- The Union Election Commission has inspected the withdrawal/receipt/use/remaining of ballot papers used for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Lanmadaw, Latha and Mayangon townships in Yangon Region, together with the respective township election sub-commission, head of police force, Immigration and Population and administrator according to the Hluttaw Election Law Section 53.
- According to the ground inspection, a total of 161 polling stations of these three townships took out 237,841 ballots and used 142,298. It left 93,573 ballots instead of 95,543. The difference was 2,065 ballots and if also found 95 extra ballots. The extra/shortage ballots were found at respective poll stations. The extra ballots were found and so it was found to print the ballots illegally.

The findings in each township are as follows:

| Sr | Subject | Numbers of polling stations | Withdrawal | Used | Exact Remaining | Remaining on the ground | Difference | |
|--------------|----------|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | | Shortage | Extra |
| 1 | Lanmadaw | 22 | 38,888 | 19,920 | 18,968 | 17,795 | 1,183 | 10 |
| 2 | Latha | 18 | 20,483 | 10,930 | 9,553 | 9,389 | 249 | 85 |
| 3 | Mayangon | 121 | 178,470 | 111,448 | 67,022 | 66,389 | 633 | - |
| Total | | 161 | 237,841 | 142,298 | 95,543 | 93,573 | 2,065 | 95 |

On the ground inspections on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Lanmadaw Township

| Sr | Subject | Withdrawal | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Difference | |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| | | | | | | Missing | Extra |
| 1 | Ward/Village-tract ballots | 35,550 | 19,190 | 16,360 | 15,187 | 1,183 | 10 |
| 2 | Township ballots | 3,338 | 730 | 2,608 | 2,608 | - | - |
| Total | | 38,888 | 19,920 | 18,968 | 17,795 | 1,183 | 10 |

- A total of 1,183 ballots of 22 polling stations in 13 Wards of Lanmadaw township were missing and the township sub-commission left 2,608 ballots while exact remaining ballots were 2,608 ballots. Moreover, the ward/village tract sub-commission received more than 10 ballots issued by township sub-commission.

9. The findings in Lanmadaw township were as follows:

| Sr | Ward | Polling station | Issued | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Missing | Extra |
|----|--------------|-----------------|--------|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|
| 1 | No (1) Ward | 2 | 3,300 | 1,855 | 1,445 | 1,446 | | 1 |
| 2 | No (2) Ward | 2 | 4,550 | 2,265 | 2,285 | 2,151 | 134 | |
| 3 | No (3) Ward | 2 | 3,250 | 1,620 | 1,630 | 729 | 901 | |
| 4 | No (4) Ward | 2 | 3,350 | 1,888 | 1,462 | 1,464 | | 2 |
| 5 | No (5) Ward | 2 | 3,450 | 1,963 | 1,487 | 1,438 | 49 | |
| 6 | No (6) Ward | 2 | 4,500 | 2,368 | 2,132 | 2,134 | | 2 |
| 7 | No (7) Ward | 3 | 5,650 | 2,997 | 2,653 | 2,658 | | 5 |
| 8 | No (8) Ward | 1 | 1,550 | 1,013 | 537 | 533 | 4 | |
| 9 | No (9) Ward | 2 | 2,550 | 1,407 | 1,143 | 1,096 | 47 | |
| 10 | No (10) Ward | 1 | 1,250 | 469 | 781 | 781 | | |
| 11 | No (11) Ward | 1 | 800 | 436 | 364 | 364 | | |
| 12 | No (12) Ward | 1 | 900 | 502 | 398 | 350 | 48 | |

Authorities are exercising restraint as peacefully as possible

EFFORTS must be exerted to develop Myanmar sports into ones that are systemic and meet international standards and to support athletes in respective states and regions to participate in international events. All border crossings have been opened for the development of trade. Measures must be taken to enable internally displaced persons to return to their native places and to arrange their secure social- economic lives. Efforts will be continued to make to vaccinate people against COVID-19. It is found that riots and protests are being incited on social media, and authorities are exercising restraint as peacefully as possible. Efforts were made to repatriate Myanmar nationals detained in Malaysia, and a total of 1,086 Myanmar nationals from Malaysia were brought back by Tatmadaw vessels. Measures are being taken to bring back those who are still left in Malaysia. The repatriation of Myanmar nationals who were abroad is one of the achievements of the council.

(Excerpt from the speech to the meeting of the State Administration Council made by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing on 2 March 2021)

Vice-Senior General Soe Win meets military personnel and families, encourages military and civilian patients in PyinOoLwin

FROM PAGE-1

with Articles 417 and 418 of the Constitution after acting President U Myint Swe declared a state of emergency on 1 February 2021, the formation of the State Administration Council with senior military officers and civilians and the implementation of the five future tasks and nine objectives, lopsided accusations on international media and social networks and by local foreign news agencies describing security forces' legitimate handling and dispersal of the riots and protests in violent and anarchy-style incidents of anti-government protesters as use of force, taking of control measures in conformity with the rules of the Riot Manual Law-1956 passed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Rules of the Manual-2015, security forces' handling of the peaceful protests from 5 to 22 February and security forces' handling of the situation in line with the step-by-step procedures of riot handling and dispersal of protesters after 23 February following a discussion for a certain period about the acts which damage the human integrity by shaving eyebrows and haircut as punishment, putting a placard on

the detained man as a criminal and tattooing on foreheads and cheeks without respecting the human integrity, threatening in the community, disturbing and attacking non-CDM participants and those unwilling by regarding them as government informers and till they could lose their lives and hanging women's longvis on the roads and using the images of revered monks, which are contrary to Myanmar's culture and custom.

The Vice-Senior General also explained the direct and indirect responsibilities of the Tatmadaw members and families during the specific time when duties of the State are being shouldered in accord with Sections 417 and 418 of the Constitution, the assurance of a faultless security system at military headquarters and an unbreakable internal unity, the restoration of permanent peace with NCA-signatory EAOs, further endeavours for the remaining groups to sign the NCA, the need for all the Tatmadaw families, as an individual, a family or a community, to stay away from committing acts that may tarnish the image of the institution they are involved in, the Tatmadaw and the State knowingly



Vice-Senior General Soe Win and party are cordially greeting and conversing with officers, other ranks and their families yesterday.

or unknowingly or intentionally or unintentionally, to have the awareness of the acts to sow seeds of distrust between the Tatmadaw and its brother organization, the Myanmar Police Force, and the need to continue the ongoing bilateral cooperation, the aids being provided by the leaders of the State and the Tatmadaw for the Tatmadaw and MPF members and their

families, and the credit given to the security forces for their 24-hour services.

Then, the Vice-Senior General and party presented food-stuffs manufactured by the factories of the Defence Services and gifts to officer trainees, permanent officers and other ranks and their families of the local units and DSTA through officials.

After the meeting, they cordially conversed with officer trainees, permanent officers, other ranks and their families.

Later, they visited the military hospital in PyinOolwin, asked after the health of officers, other ranks, MPF members and civilian patients, receiving treatments there, individually, and presented gifts to them.—MNA

Announcement of Union Election Commission

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| Sr | Ward | Polling station | Issued | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Missing | Extra |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|
| 13 | Maw Tin temporary market | 1 | 450 | 407 | 43 | 43 | | |
| Total Wards | | 22 | 35,550 | 19,190 | 16,360 | 15,187 | 1,183 | 10 |
| Township remaining ballots | | | 3,338 | 730 | 2,608 | 2,608 | | |
| Total in township | | | 38,888 | 19,920 | 18,968 | 17,795 | 1,183 | 10 |

On the ground inspections on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Latha Township

| Sr | Subject | Withdrawal | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Difference | |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------|--------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|-------|
| | | | | | | Missing | Extra |
| 1 | Ward/Village-tract ballots | 18,900 | 10,622 | 8,278 | 8,102 | 249 | 73 |
| 2 | Township advance ballots | 389 | 308 | 81 | 93 | - | 12 |
| 3 | Township remaining ballots | 1,194 | - | 1,194 | 1,194 | - | - |
| Total | | 20,483 | 10,930 | 9,553 | 9,389 | 249 | 85 |

10. A total of 249 ballots were missing and it found 85 extra ballots – 73 ballots and 12 township advance ballots at 18 polling stations of 10 Wards in Latha Township.

11. Findings in Latha township were as follows:

| Sr | Ward/Village-tract | Polling station No | Issued | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Missing | Extra |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|-------|
| 1 | No (1) Ward | 2 | 2,150 | 1,135 | 1,015 | 1,018 | - | 3 |
| 2 | No (2) Ward | 2 | 2,350 | 1,158 | 1,192 | 992 | 200 | - |
| 3 | No (3) Ward | 2 | 2,050 | 1,272 | 778 | 780 | - | 2 |
| 4 | No (4) Ward | 2 | 2,500 | 1,368 | 1,132 | 1,142 | - | 10 |
| 5 | No (5) Ward | 2 | 2,100 | 1,203 | 897 | 907 | - | 4 |
| 6 | No (6) Ward | 2 | 2,100 | 1,115 | 985 | 936 | 49 | |
| 7 | No (7) Ward | 2 | 1,950 | 1,063 | 887 | 891 | - | 4 |
| 8 | No (8) Ward | 2 | 2,150 | 1,165 | 985 | 985 | - | - |
| 9 | No (9) Ward | 1 | 1,000 | 766 | 234 | 234 | - | - |
| 10 | No (10) Ward | 1 | 550 | 377 | 173 | 223 | - | 50 |
| Total Ward | | 18 | 18,900 | 10622 | 8,278 | 8,102 | 249 | 73 |
| Township advance ballots | | | 389 | 308 | 81 | 93 | - | 12 |
| Township remaining | | | 1,194 | - | 1,194 | 1,194 | - | - |
| Total township | | | 20,483 | 10930 | 9,553 | 9,389 | 249 | 85 |

On the ground inspections on ballot papers for Pyithu Hluttaw Election of Mayangon Township

| Sr | Subject | Withdrawal | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Difference | |
|--------------|----------------------------|------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|------------|-------|
| | | | | | | Missing | Extra |
| 1 | Ward/Village-tract ballots | 166,750 | 108,720 | 58,030 | 57,397 | 633 | - |
| 2 | Township advance ballots | 2,728 | 2,728 | - | - | - | - |
| 3 | Township remaining | 8,997 | - | 8,992 | 8,992 | - | - |
| Total | | 178,470 | 111,448 | 67,022 | 66,389 | 633 | - |

12. A total of 633 ballots were missing at 121 polling stations in 10 wards of Mayangon Township. Although the township sub-commission must have 67,022 ballots, they have only 66,389 ballots and of them, 8,992 ballots were unused.

13. Findings in Mayangon Township were as follows:

| Sr | Ward/Village-tract | Polling station | Issued | Used | Exact remaining | Remaining on the ground | Missing |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------|
| 1 | No (1) Ward | 20 | 36,500 | 23,016 | 13,484 | 13,224 | 260 |
| 2 | No (2) Ward | 24 | 32,000 | 20,804 | 11,196 | 11,135 | 61 |
| 3 | No (3) Ward | 16 | 22,400 | 14,911 | 7,489 | 7,439 | 50 |
| 4 | No (4) Ward | 9 | 11,500 | 8,169 | 3,331 | 3,331 | - |
| 5 | No (5) Ward | 21 | 28,450 | 18,276 | 10,174 | 9,932 | 242 |
| 6 | No (6) Ward | 6 | 6,200 | 4,087 | 2,113 | 2,093 | 20 |
| 7 | No (7) Ward | 4 | 6,900 | 4,450 | 2,450 | 2,450 | - |
| 8 | No (8) Ward | 9 | 11,000 | 7,130 | 3,870 | 3,870 | - |
| 9 | No (9) Ward | 7 | 7,300 | 4,756 | 2,544 | 2,544 | - |
| 10 | No (10) Ward | 5 | 4,500 | 3,121 | 1,379 | 1,379 | - |
| Total Ward/Village-tract | | 121 | 166,750 | 108,720 | 58,030 | 57,937 | 633 |
| Township advance ballots | | | 2,728 | 2,728 | - | - | - |
| Township remaining ballots | | | 8,992 | - | 8,992 | 8,992 | - |
| Total Township | | | 178,470 | 111,448 | 67,022 | 66,389 | 633 |

14. The previous election commission announced 111,288 people cast votes in Mayangon Township of Yangon Region. According to the inspection, they used 111,448 ballots and so they used extra 160 ballots.

Yangon Region's Hlinethaya, Shwepyitha townships placed under Martial Law

GLOBAL Fashion Garment Factory, Wai Kyal Garment Factory, Golden Dragon Fertilizer Plant and two other garment factories in Hlinethaya Township, Yangon Region, were set fire yesterday. Rioters created havoc on roads, and over 2,000 rioters also blocked the roads to prevent fire engines from leaving their stations and fighting the fire. The rioters also carried out similar activities with creating havoc on roads over the previous days.

Similarly, fire outbreaks occurred at the Myanmar Solo Moda Garment Factory,

JCK Garment Factory and the Basic Education High School on the Bayintnaung Road in Ward-6 yesterday.

By placing havoc on roads, rioters managed to prevent the fire engines from fighting the fires. The rioters also carried out similar activities in the township yesterday.

Therefore, the State Administration Council, to effectively enforce security, the rule of law and community peace, placed the Hlinethaya Township and Shwepyitha Township of Yangon Region under the Martial Law. —MNA

Returnees from India undergo quarantine at Tatmadaw's quarantine centre



Returnees seen getting COVID tested.

A TOTAL OF 71 Myanmar marine workers repatriated from India by Tatmadaw's vessels in accordance with the instructions of the State Administration Council Chairman Senior General Min Aung Hlaing are currently placed at Tatmadaw quarantine centre in South

Okkapala Township of Yangon to provide proper medical treatments.

The military medical team provide them with the needed healthcare services and Tatmadaw will send them back to their respective regions and states when they complete quarantine. —MNA

Request to Public

1. Democracy practices have granted the public for freedom of speech, practices and living. Such freedoms should not harm others. Diverse views of others should be understood, but should not be disturbed or harassed. However, with the reason of human rights, some persons are now under pressured, harassed and threatened in breaching the laws. Undisciplined acts could lead to tarnish the image of democracy.
2. For preventing destructive actions against stability of the state, safety of the public and rule of law, it is also required to proper actions in line with the law.
3. All the people who favour justice, freedom, equality and safety are requested to oppose breaching the laws and prevent such actions for the benefit of country and people.

Throne sections of Bhumi Phassa Mudra sitting Buddha brought to Nay Pyi Taw



A convoy of vehicles seen conveying parts of the Bhumi Phassa Mudra Sitting Buddha to Nay Pyi Taw on 13 March 2021.

THE statue of the Bhumi Phassa Mudra sitting Buddha and the pieces of throne have been transported from Semikhone port to Nay Pyi Taw Council Territory, and the second section and the pair of the throne were brought to the designated place on 13 March.

Sayadaws and monks, along with State Central Working Committee of the Sangha Aungsithar Sayadaw Agga Maha Pandita, Bhaddanta Wiskkhana, Lt-Gen Kyaw Swar Lin, Lt Gen Kan Myint Than from the office of the Commander-in-Chief and military officials

and invited guests attended the ceremony for conveying the throne of the Buddha statue.

The weights of the second section and the pair of the throne were 655 tonnes and 315 tonnes respectively, and the remaining parts will be brought as planned. —MNA

COVID-19 immunization conducted to monks, nuns and civil service personnel

TATMADAW has been working together with civilian doctors who did not participate in the CDM campaign to conduct COVID-19 immunization across the country.

On 11 and 14 March, the vaccination was administered to the people over the age of 65, including monks, nuns and civil service personnel in Nam-

tu, Namsang (North), Hsipaw, Hsenwi, Taunggyi, Ayethayar, Hopong, Kalaw, Aungban, Nyaungshwe, Seikhaung, Kunhing, Mongnai, Maukmai, Loilem, Panglong, Tachilek, Monghsat, Mongkhok townships in Shan State; Bawlake and Moebyal townships in Kayah State; Dawei township in Taninthayi Region; Pathein

township in Ayeyawady Region; Mawlaik township in Sagaing Region; Nattalin and Monyo townships in Bago Region.

Chairpersons of the respective region administration councils and officials from the respective regional commands encouraged and donated offerings to the monks.—MNA



A nun is seen receiving COVID vaccination in Mawlaik.

Republic of the Union of Myanmar State Administration Council Nine Objectives

1. Political affairs

- (a) Building of a Union based on democracy and federalism in practising genuine disciplined multiparty democracy in a full fairness manner;
- (b) Emphasizing of restoration of eternal peace for the entire nation in line with the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA);
- (c) Continuous practising of the “principle” of peaceful co-existence among countries by holding up the independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy.

2. Economic affairs

- (a) Further development of production based on agriculture and livestock breeding through modern techniques and all-round development of other

sectors of the economy as well;

- (b) Stability of market economy and inviting international investments to develop the economy of entire ethnic people;
- (c) Encouragement of local businesses to create employment opportunities to be able to produce many products of the State.

3. Social affairs

- (a) For ensuring of dynamism of Union spirit which is genuine patriotic spirit;
- (b) Following customs and traditions of all ethnic nationalities and preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and national characters;
- (c) Enhancement of health, fitness and education standards of the entire nation.

11 new cases of COVID-19 reported on 14 March, total figure rises to 142,147

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases rose to **142,147** after **11** new cases were reported on 14 March 2021 according to the Ministry of Health and Sports. Among these confirmed cases, **3,202** died, **131,39** have been discharged from hospitals.—MNA

Police stations attacked with slingshots and bottles of petrol in Mandalay



Police stations were attacked by anarchic mob in Mandalay yesterday.

POLICE stations were attacked by slingshots and bottles of petrol with the attempt to burn down the stations in Mahaaungmye township, Aungmyethazan township, Pyigyidagun township in Mandalay Region yesterday.

While groups of people who resort to violence were using

handmade bombs and burning car tyres, throwing petrol bottles to attack the police stations, security forces had to disperse them to maintain the situation for the rule of law. Although buildings were not destroyed, some police were injured and a total of 15 rioters were arrested

to take legal action against them.

Rioters who do not want stability, peace and security in the country have accelerated to confront security forces by inciting people to take to the roads, commit anarchic violence and raid on police stations.—MNA

1 police, 4 civilians injured, 1 killed in shooting at Phakant

THE security forces dispersed a protest crowd of around 450 people in front of the Mashi Ka Htaung Ward administration office in Phakant Township of Kachin State yesterday.

The protest crowd shouted slangs in front of the administration office and did not agree with the negotiation of the security forces to disperse. Therefore, the security forces fired at protestors to dis-

perse. Police Constable Zaw Zaw Aung was injured on his eyebrow due to the attack of riotous protestors.

Meanwhile, Kyaw Lin Htike, aged 30, son of U Tin Wa from Sate Mu Ward of Phakant Township died on the spot and another four people — three men and one woman were injured. A case was opened and police carried out necessary measures.—MNA

Rioters attack railway police station in Bago

A group of 200 rioters violently attacked the security forces in the railway police station which is about 150 yards from the Bago train station in Bago Township yesterday afternoon and security forces had to fire warning shots to disperse the mob.

The mob used slingshots and rings of incendiary materials with the screams during the attack. Although buildings were not burned, the fire rings fell

on the garbage and the police had to extinguish the fire. It is reported that the police force has been beefed up to provide security for the railway police station.

Rioters who do not want stability, peace and security in the country have accelerated to confront security forces by inciting people to take to the roads, commit anarchic violence and raid on police stations.—MNA



Security forces are dispersing the mob who attack the Bago train station.

Sagaing Region sees less cotton production this year

SAGAING REGION, which had over 100,000 acres of cotton the previous years, covers only 64,000 acres this year.

“If the crop is potential, the growers plant them. The high input cost and low profit bring down the acreage in the region,” said U Kyaw Soe, head of Sagaing Region Agriculture Department (Administration Division).

Cotton growers said that the cotton fetches K1,700 per viss (a viss equals 1.6 kg) this year.

“The cotton price is not that low. Nevertheless, the growers lose interest in cotton this growing season. Consequently, the number of acres has decreased,” a grower elaborated.

Cotton is included in the



Cotton is included in the National Export Strategy, and textile fibre and fabric is listed on priorities for exports. PHOTO: LULAY

National Export Strategy, and textile fibre and fabric is listed on priorities for exports.

Cotton is solely dependent on the Chinese market, resulting in price instability. Therefore, to

control the market, more foreign market access is required, the Sagaing Region Agriculture

Department stated.

At present, cotton has only a Chinese market through border trade. Price instability occurs depending on China's demand. In a bid to control the market, cotton is required to penetrate more foreign markets through typical marketing besides China, said an official from the Department. Cotton should be a profitable crop beyond covering input cost to regulate the cotton market. If not, growers will turn to other crops, said a grower.

There are 64,094 acres of cotton between April 2020 and March 2021 in five Sagaing Region districts, covering 19 townships in Monywa, Sagaing, Yinmabin, Shwebo and Kantbalu districts. — Lu Lay/GNLM

Myanmar-Thailand border trade down by \$452 mln as of 5 March

THE value of Myanmar's bilateral trade with the neighbouring country Thailand through the land border has registered a decrease of US\$452 million between 1 October and 5 March of the current financial year 2020-2021 as against a year-ago period, the Ministry of Commerce-issued statistics indicated.

The ministry reported exports surpassed imports in trade with Thailand this year, with exports reaching over \$985.6 million and imports valued at over \$454 million, totalling \$1.4 billion.

During the corresponding period of the past FY2019-2020, Myanmar-Thailand border trade touched a high of \$1.89 billion.

Following some traders tested positive for COVID-19, some border posts were temporarily halted last year. At present, fruits and agricultural products such as cucumber, mango, tomato and vegetable, fishery products, building materials and other pharmaceutical-related goods and equipment can be traded. Myanmar-Thailand friendship bridge No. 2 is also open for trading.

The halt in trading undoubtedly harmed the traders and truck drivers from

both sides, said a trader from Myawady.

During the last budget year, Myanmar has increasingly exported corns to Thailand through the Myawady border. Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through border posts between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period in the FY2019-2020, an official of the Ministry of Commerce said.

At present, Myanmar exports the corn to Thailand through Myawady and Tachilek land borders. About 5,000-6,000 tonnes of corn are daily sent to Thailand through Myawady, while the Tachilek border does not regularly export.

Myanmar is allowed for corn export between 1 February and 31 August with Form-D, under zero tariff. Thailand imposed 73 per cent of tax on corn import to protect their growers' rights if the corns are imported during the corn season of Thailand as per the World Trade Organization notification regarding corn import of Thailand, said a corn exporter.

Myanmar intends to reach an export target of one million tonnes of corns to Thailand this year, said U Min Khaing, chair of the Myanmar Corn Industri-

al Association.

Additionally, exports of natural gas from the Taninthayi Region has contributed to the enormous increase in border trade with Thailand in the previous years. This year, gas exports via the Hteekee border drastically fell.

There are seven border posts between Myanmar and Thailand, Tachilek, Myawady, Kawthoung, Htikhee, Myeik, Mawtaung and Maese. Except for Tachilek and Myawady, the remaining border posts showed a decrease in the trade this FY.

The value of border trade stood at \$159.27 million via Tachilek, \$549.48 million via Myawady, \$159.8 million via Kawthoung, \$62.565 million via Myeik, \$501.97 million via Hteekee and \$6.9 million via Mawtaung. Maese border post has not witnessed any trade yet.

Myanmar primarily exports natural gas, fishery products, coal, tin concentrate (SN 71.58 per cent), coconut (fresh and dry), beans, and bamboo shoots to Thailand. It imports capital goods such as machinery, raw industrial goods such as cement and fertilizers, consumer goods such as cosmetics and food products from the neighbouring country. —HH/GNLM

Sino-Myanmar border trade up despite political changes: MOC reports

SINO-MYANMAR border trade has registered a rise of US\$227.37 million between 1 October and 5 March in the current financial year 2020-2021 amid the political changes, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

As of 5 March 2021, Myanmar's exports to China through the land border were valued at \$1.9 billion, while imports are worth \$897.8 million. The value of Sino-Myanmar border trade via all five border posts touched over \$2.89 billion in the current FY, which significantly soared from over \$2.66 billion recorded in the year-ago period, indicated the Ministry of Commerce's data.

The increase in trade is attributed to the extending trading hours at Muse-Man Wein and Kyinsankyawt checkpoints. Furthermore, Pan Hseng (Kuykok) and Wan Ding border posts also gave the green light to fruit trucks under the driver substitution system.

This FY, border trade values totalled \$2.28 billion through the Muse border, \$123.3 million via Lweje, \$274.936 million via Chinshwehaw, \$204.8 million via Kampaiti, and over \$5 million via Kengtung. The Commerce Ministry's data showed a rise in trade value through all those border posts.

Muse is an essential border in Myanmar and handles an enormous volume of trade. But at times, it has experienced a sharp drop in trade on account of China clamping down on illegal goods, resulting in a halt in the trade of

agricultural products. Moreover, the COVID-19 impacts slow the trade last year.

In a bid to contain the spread of coronavirus on the border, China banned border crossing. Shortly after that, about 50 drivers are allowed to pass the crossing under the driver substitution system. Those drivers are, however, tested every three days. As a result of this, China included them in the vaccination programme, covering more than 40 Myanmar truck drivers, vice-chair of Muse rice wholesale centre said.

In a bid to lower trade barriers and offer relief to Myanmar traders through the border trade channel, the Ministry of Commerce, the related departments and the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been negotiating with China counterparts.

The two countries are making efforts to set up more border economic cooperation zones and promote border trade. Myanmar's MOC is trying to boost exports of rice, broken rice, agro-products, fruits and fisheries to China through negotiations.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, including rice, beans and corns, and fishery products such as crab, prawn, and others. Furthermore, Myanmar's natural gas export to China is also conducted through the Muse-Ruili border. The raw CMP materials, electrical appliance and consumer goods are imported into the country. —KK/GNLM

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Healthcare services at people's hospitals a great way to help people

PEOPLE of the world's countries, including Myanmar, demand Universal Health Coverage (UHC) of good quality to ensure their access to healthcare services for disease prevention and cure, palliation, health promotion, and rehabilitation. The health services in Myanmar are offered by both the public and private sectors.

Besides, our people are relying on people's hospital for health care service as the cost at the people's hospital is not a financial burden for them in compared with the cost at the private hospitals.

With free health care service, people's hospitals are playing a crucial role in providing health care services to the people in Myanmar, especially for the people at the grassroot level.

Hence, the country is producing doctors every year, but the total number of doctors at the hospitals nationwide do not reach over one thousand. Therefore, the imbalance physician-to-patient ratio has been a headache for our country for years, and the Ministry of Health and Sports have to handle this issue every year. Now, there are about 10,000 vacancies for doctors at hospitals to meet the need of the organizational set up for the healthcare system.

With the CDM movement, doctors working for the people's hospitals walked out of the hospitals, and it has been a blow to the country's health care system.

The healthcare professionals and workers are the sine qua non for an efficient and effective healthcare system and their shortage is an impediment to the achievement of Millennium Development Goals.

This situation has directly affected the people who need health care at hospitals.

Medical professionals have to take the Hippocratic oath and use it as ethics as well.

With the oath-taking, they have to declare their commitment to assume the responsibilities and obligations of the medical profession and have to promise that they will, to the best of their ability, serve humanity—caring for the sick, promoting good health, and alleviating pain and suffering.

With people who are in need of medical care at the people's hospitals, doctors, while accepting responsibility for patient safety and promising to act professionally, should practice medicine without considerations of political affiliation.



US leads billion-plus vaccine push in India

INDIA will produce more than one billion more COVID vaccine doses by the end of next year in an initiative launched Friday with the United States (US), Japan and Australia, challenging China as the four leaders held their first-ever joint summit.

US President Joe Biden, who has vowed to reinvigorate alliances in the face of growing worries about China, met virtually with the three nations' prime ministers as they pledged together to defend a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region.

"We're renewing our commitment to ensure that our region is governed by international law, committed to upholding universal values and free from coercion," said Biden, who like the others made no explicit, but plenty of implicit, mentions of China.

Vowing to show concrete results, the so-called Quad announced that Indian company Biological Ltd. would manufacture at least one billion additional vaccine doses by the end of 2022, focusing on the single-shot, US-developed Johnson & Johnson jab that was approved Friday by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, called the plan a "massive joint commitment" and said that Southeast Asia would be the priority to receive the shots, which should come well after the US is largely vaccinated.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the vaccine initiative showed that the Quad is "a positive force for global good and for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific". India, a global pharmaceutical hub, is already sending vaccines to 70 nations and called the Quad initiative a vindication. "We believe that this will speed up the process of post-pandemic recovery and enable families and businesses to put the COVID-19 crisis behind them," Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla told reporters in New Delhi.

The White House said that Japan and the US would provide favourable loans to allow the Indian production, with Australia stepping up to nearly US\$500 million funding to administer vaccines in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The plan comes as China, where the deadly virus was first detected in late 2019, works to transform its image into that of a global healer.

China has shipped vaccines as far afield as the Dominican Republic and provided doses to international partners such as Pakistan and Zimbabwe.

Flurry Of Diplomacy

The Quad summit kicks off a flurry of diplomacy by Biden, who promised an in-person meeting with the other three leaders this year.



A monitor displaying a virtual meeting with US President Joe Biden (top L), Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison (bottom L), Japan's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (top R) and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seen during the virtual Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) meeting, at Suga's official residence in Tokyo on 12 March, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

is taking a more tactical approach that includes a renewed focus on alliances—many of which, especially in Europe, were badly rattled by the vitriolic Trump. Japan announced that Suga will become the first foreign leader to have White House talks with Biden, who has tried to set an example by limiting travel and meetings during the pandemic. —AFP ■

The Biden administration says it largely agrees with previous president Donald Trump's hawkish line of China but that it

will become the first foreign leader to have White House talks with Biden, who has tried to set an example by limiting travel and meetings during the pandemic. —AFP ■

AstraZeneca defends its vaccine amid safety fears

DOGGED already by draws with European politicians, AstraZeneca was forced anew to defend its coronavirus vaccine on Friday over concerns about a potential link to blood clots.

The decision of some countries in Europe and Asia to suspend their use of the COVID-19 jab was extra bad news for the United Kingdom (UK)-based pharmaceutical company, which has taken a knock with investors even as authorities around the world insist the jab remains safe.

"An analysis of our safety data of more than 10 million records has shown no evidence of an increased risk of pulmonary embolism or deep vein thrombosis in any defined age group, gender, batch or in any particular country" from the jab, AstraZeneca said.

"In fact, the observed number of these types of events are significantly lower in those vaccinated than would be expected among the general population."

The job, developed with Oxford University, forms the mainstay of Britain's vaccination programme, and of many



A health worker (R) receives the AstraZeneca/Oxford COVID-19 coronavirus vaccine at the National Hospital of Tropical Diseases in Hanoi on 8 March, 2021. PHOTO: AFP

developing economies. It is relatively cheap, and easier to store than other jabs.

But it has been repeatedly hit by controversy in Europe, with some governments initially refusing to certify its use for people aged over 65 – initially over sparse data proving it was safe for the elderly, although this has now been provided.

The company has also been embroiled in a dispute with the European Union (EU) over its

delivery schedule, amid accusations that it is favouring Britain because its home country secured a contract earlier, prior to its full exit from the EU.

The controversies have taken a toll on public confidence in Europe, with millions of AstraZeneca jabs sitting unused to the consternation of experts who say that needless rows are setting the inoculation campaign back.

"When something bad happens after you have had a vaccination, it's natural enough to wonder whether the vaccine was the cause," said Adam Finn, professor of paediatrics at the University of Bristol in southwest England.

But in any mass inoculation campaign, "unexpected and unusual illnesses are going to happen in the period following vaccination by chance", he said.

"In the meantime, the risk benefit balance is very clear – better to get vaccinated as soon as the invitation arrives both to minimise your personal risk and to help get the epidemic under control, so we can all progress towards a more normal future."

'Dubious' Politics This week Denmark, Norway and Iceland all paused their use of the AstraZeneca vaccine as a precaution after isolated reports of recipients developing blood clots.

Italy and Austria have also stopped the use of shots from separate batches, while Bulgaria and Thailand said they would delay its rollout.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) earlier Friday said there was no reason to stop using the vaccine, stressing there was no causal link between the jab and any clotting. A range of other health authorities have also insisted it is safe, including the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

But the EMA on Friday also said that severe allergies should be added to its possible side-effects. Britain began the world's first vaccination drive in the general population in December, underpinned largely by the Oxford-AstraZeneca jab and another from Pfizer-BioNTech, and has strenuously defended AstraZeneca's safety and efficacy. But the impact of the rolling disputes is being seen on the London stock market.

In Friday afternoon trading, AstraZeneca shares were down 1.11 per cent at 6,935.00 pence. They have lost five per cent over the year to date, compared to a rise of 4.50 per cent for London's FTSE-100 share index.

"Coming on top of reports in some countries that are linking the vaccine to blood clots, the company can't seem to catch a break when it comes to reports around its vaccine," CMC Markets chief market analyst Michael Hewson said. The EU delivery shortfalls were "more of an optics problem than anything else", he added.

"The reality is that the EU currently has up to 11.5 million unused vaccine doses due to a reluctance to take the vaccine as a result of dubious efficacy claims by some European politicians, which has meant that uptake of the vaccine has struggled to gain traction." —AFP ■

Objectives of 76th Anniversary Armed Forces Day

FOR the Tatmadaw to join hands with the entire nation to safeguard democracy, which is the aspiration of all the nationalities of the country, from deviating from its path, in accord with the basic principles of the Constitution, while observing Our Three Main National Causes, which is the national policy;

To protect the people from all dangers including natural disasters at any time and in any situation and to provide all-round assistance for ensuring social security of the people;

To restore eternal peace based on NCA, without deviating from Our Three Main National Causes, as the cessation of armed conflicts is the principal requirement in realizing democracy;

To build a strong and compact Standard Army, which has the combat prowess and combat power; to effectively safeguard the State peace and stability and sovereignty.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report (Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 14 March 2021)

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

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 15 March 2021: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Taninthayi Region and isolated in Upper Sagaing, Bago Regions and Kachin, Kayin, Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%). Weather will be partly cloudy in the remaining Regions and States.

STATE OF THE SEA: Seas will be moderate in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (4-7) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Increase of day temperatures in Nay Pyi Taw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway Regions, Shan, Chin States.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 March 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 March 2021: Partly cloudy.

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 15 March 2021: Generally fair weather.

Need to have true courage

By Hein Ko

THE truth and courage are interrelated to each other. No matter how brave you are, if you do something wrong even though you know it, such courage or bravery will instantly disappear, and you will also become a coward.

Character

Character means a way to teach moral behaviour. Everyone must have good morality, and having righteousness is just the best policy. The actions, habits, moral character and ethics are morality. "If you have a good character, you will be a polite person being respected by others. And you also will have a peaceful mind," according to Myoma Myint Kywe. Then, "If you lose your wealth, you have lost nothing. If you lose your health, you have lost something. However, if you lose your character, you have lost everything," said Philosopher Socrates.

The persons with good character can distinguish right and wrong. Moreover, they can control themselves not to break any rules. Those without good character cannot determine right and wrong and are lacking modesty or fear of sinning. Modesty is vital for human beings' value, so people think of it as doing something bad.

Some youths protesting on the roads intentionally commit social bullying via social

network, and such doings are disgraceful and shameless manners. The plebeian way does not mean undergraduate, poor or ugly, it means the wicket moral characters and stances. Expressing the bad words just deviating from ethics are plebeian manners.

A person is born with a combination of polite or rude manners. Today, some people are rude on social media. Maybe, they are delivered in rough ways, and they no longer hide their inferiority during this current situation. Most of them are not mature enough. While some are CDM participants, some are rich, and some are unemployed. They use inappropriate pictures or images that should not be seen even in families.

Target

"The people are not afraid to admit their greedy or anger, but they don't dare to express their envy. The envious mind is worse than other," Sayadaw U Jotika preached. The unscrupulous persons intentionally commit incitements to government staff to join CDM. But some of the CDM participants understand the situation and enter their duties as usual. Those hooked CDM due to these incitements are currently unemployed without any income.

Those full of envious mind easily do something terrible

to others without any hesitancy. Their doings, like posts of their one-sided thoughts and rootless information, can be seen online. But, factual and accurate information cannot be a cover-up in this 21st Century.

Getting lost in the dark

Let's look at the current news items spreading on the social network. Some of the news are false. It can easily mislead ignorant and unintelligent people, and some become lost in these fake news items. Meanwhile, some even want

the help of foreign countries. They take to the streets to protest by breaking the rules and want foreign countries' help without thinking of officials' less strong riot control methods. Such moves are so silly and reckless.

Therefore, the intellectual persons urged the people to read good literature, not to trust others easily. Good readers have reasoning skills to consider what is wrong and what is right. Only a good character and mindset can overcome the actions of a "stupid

but good-hearted person". Although you have good character and attitude, you will make mistakes in serving the country and people even if you think and do so with "cetana". Therefore, only with good character and right-thinking can there be true courage.

People should consider these transitions in Myanmar political affairs with good characters and mindsets during this current situation. They should have the right thoughts to achieve true courage.

Translated.

Some of the news are false. It can easily mislead ignorant and unintelligent people, and some become lost in these fake news items. Meanwhile, some even want the help of foreign countries. They take to the streets to protest by breaking the rules and want foreign countries' help without thinking of officials' less strong riot control methods.

PANDEMIC: LATEST STORIES

US weighs 3-foot distancing rule, a major change



Social distancing circles in New York -- but could the rules soon be cut from six foot to three foot? **PHOTO: AFP**

The United States' top pandemic advisor said Sunday that authorities were considering cutting social distancing rules to three feet (one meter), a move that would change a key tenet of the global fight against Covid-19.

Anthony Fauci, a world-respected figure during the coronavirus crisis, said experts at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) were examining a Massachusetts study that found "no substantial difference" in Covid cases in schools observing six-foot and three-foot rules.

Asked on CNN's "State of the Union" show whether that meant that a three-foot separation was sufficient, Fauci replied, "It does, indeed".

While cautioning that the CDC was still poring over the new data and conducting tests of its own, he said its findings would come "soon".

The six-foot social distancing rule has been a widely-adopted global measure to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, along with mask-wearing and hand-washing.

School officials across the world are under enormous

pressure to fully reopen as soon as safely possible, but many say the six-foot requirement makes it extremely difficult without adding portable classrooms or shortening the school day.

Many teachers unions have also insisted on six-foot distancing.

Policies on reopening schools and businesses have varied sharply across the US and around the globe as government try to balance quelling infections with a return to normal life.

—AFP ■

Resume banking operations for daily cash flow

By Nay Chi Thway

THE banking sector has been essential to developing social sectors. People keep their money and important documents as well as loan assistance and money transfer on a daily basis at the banks. To be exact, people open bank accounts to save money, take loan assistance to buy cars, homes and phones, and others. Besides, banks are responsible for transferring money from one to another, locally and internationally. At present, there are four government banks and 27 private banks in Myanmar.

Some bank staff from those banks participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement

(CDM) campaign as anti-State activists have been inciting them intending to stop the State's financial machinery. Since early February and banks had to close as the bank staff were continuously forced to join the CDM campaign, protesters had been staging demonstrations around the banks.

The bank staff who were serving their duty at work were humiliated with their photos on social media. It made trouble for the bank staff who were working to make the finance of the people convenient.

While the private banks have been paying their em-

ployees, it is heard that the banks are also trying to gather employees to resume banking operations.

It can be said the private banks shut down since 8 February, which affects people's life primarily. I would like to speak to those who support CDM responsible for the inconvenient lives of the people who keep money in the bank and hold international or local bank cards. These export-import businesses rely on money transfer at the banks' employees who receive their salary through the bank.

Bank staff who put money in ATMs during the most

turbulent time were also condemned for not joining the CDM so that they will be scared to do so again. Moreover, there were rumours circulated to raise public concerns to the highest level that the country has run out of money, and some banknotes will be demonetized again.

Although the Central Bank of Myanmar instructed private banks to reopen in February, only a few branches could reopen. Although banks such as Myawady Bank opened their branches to support financial operations while many private banks were shut down, inciters continuously took all their money.

Because the people are worried, they are taking all of their money from every opening bank. However, it is not necessary for them due to the mismatch between the services that can be provided. The people, banks are also in the struggle to resume operation.

Exporters are not able to withdraw or transfer payment when banks are closed, which could also affect the ability to control commodity prices, hurting all import-export business and domestic products. Only the people will suffer from this consequence. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, people have lived with lower income and economic downturn, following the banks' shutdown make the situation worse.

Banks are financial intermediaries, accepting deposits

and lending money back to the people. Banks are the most fundamental part of the financial system and the key player in the financial market. We rely on banks to withdraw money from our deposit, check the balance of our accounts, and draw salary every month. We should be aware of the fact that the country's economy can be affected when the business of the people who received bank loans are in crisis and when the cash flow has become difficult.

Although there are mobile and electronic payment systems, most people cannot use them yet. If the banks did not resume regular operation, we would face the weak usage of cash on living and healthcare. Since the banks are the crucial parts of the State, we hope the resumption of banking operations to normal.

It is not the current government but the people who have deposit, money transfer, and loan assistance at most private banks. We, the public, have suffered from the consequence of the banks' shutdown. No citizen can stand the long-term difficulties to withdraw his or her own money from the bank. I wish people find out those who are inciting from behind and report to the responsible persons so that they can be taken legal action. I specially invited the bank staff to return to work and serve the people as soon as possible.

Translated.

Bank staff who put money in ATMs during the most turbulent time were also condemned for not joining the CDM so that they will be scared to do so again. Moreover, there were rumours circulated to raise public concerns to the highest level that the country has run out of money, and some banknotes will be demonetized again.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS UPDATE

Yellen says Biden has yet to decide on a wealth tax



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen listens during a March 5, 2021 meeting with President Joe Biden in the White House; he hasn't decided yet on imposing a wealth tax, she now says. PHOTO: AFP

AMID reports that the richest Americans have grown far richer during the pandemic year, Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said Sunday the Biden administration had yet to decide on imposing a new wealth tax. "That's something that we haven't decided yet," Yellen said on ABC's "This Week" programme.

She said that President Joe Biden "hasn't proposed a wealth tax, but he has proposed that corporations and wealthy individuals should pay more in order to meet the needs of the economy, the

spending we need to do".

Senator Elizabeth Warren, a liberal Democrat, has called for an annual tax of two per cent on every dollar of people's wealth above \$50 million, and three percent on every dollar above \$1 billion. Last month, Yellen told the New York Times that a Warren-style wealth tax would have "very difficult implementation problems". But she said she would consider other approaches that might have a similar effect.

A recent study by the humanitarian group Oxfam found

that the world's richest 10 people -- including Americans Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Bill Gates -- had collectively seen their fortunes grow by \$540 billion since the pandemic began, even as millions of Americans suffered.

The trillions of dollars spent in government stimulus plans during the pandemic have greatly swollen the federal deficit, and Republicans -- who supported stimulus spending during the Trump administration -- now warn that the deficits risk becoming unmanageable. —AFP ■

Netanyahu: master politician fighting for survival

BENJAMIN Netanyahu has remained in power as Israeli prime minister for a record 12 consecutive years, partly by convincing some voters that only he can keep the Jewish state safe while defending it on the world stage.

But on March 23, the 71-year-old wily politician faces his fourth re-election contest in less than two years, after repeatedly failing to unite a coalition behind him, despite his devoted right-wing base.

Polls indicate that this master political survivor, widely known as Bibi, could again struggle to forge the necessary 61-seat parliamentary majority.



People walk past an electoral billboard for Israel's Likud party bearing a portrait of its leader Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who faces the fourth election in under two years. **PHOTO: AFP**

Since Israelis last voted a year ago, support for Netanyahu's Likud may have even dipped, despite clinching historic

normalization agreements with four Arab states and unrolling a world-beating Covid-19 vaccination campaign, the envy of many nations.

One reason why his political standing remains fragile is that his dealings with coalition partners are so often undermined by mistrust, said Colin Shindler, a leading Israel scholar at London's SOAS University.

"You trust people insofar as you can use them, as you can pretend to forge friendships and alliances with them," said Shindler, author of "The Rise of the Israel Right: from Odessa to Hebron".

"But at the end of the day your core belief is to protect yourself and survive," Shindler told AFP. "That is how I perceive Netanyahu."

Yet despite being the first sitting Israeli premier indicted while in office over corruption allegations which he denies, Netanyahu may well survive the ballot box again.

That is because part of the electorate still sees him as the safest available pair of hands to guide the nation, Shindler said.

"That's the reason he's still in power. He's the national goal-keeper and he doesn't let in any goals".—AFP ■

Ailing Greek far-left hitman ends hunger strike: lawyer

JAILED Greek far-left hitman Dimitris Koufodinas on Sunday ended a 66-day hunger strike, his lawyer said, a day after doctors warned he risked "sudden death" from disruption to multiple vital organs.

"We persuaded him to end the strike," Koufodinas' lawyer Ioanna Kourtovik told AFP.

In a statement released through Kourtovik, Koufodinas thanked "progressive people" for having shown their support in multiple protests around the country in the past months. The demonstrations were often marred by violence.

"What is happening out there is more important than what initiated it," he said.

Koufodinas, who turns 63 next week, is serving multiple life sentences for 11 murders

he carried out for the extremist group November 17.

For 20 years, the group targeted industrialists, policemen, foreign diplomats and soldiers, before being dismantled in 2002.

Considered the outfit's top assassin and dubbed 'Poison Hand' by Greek media, Koufodinas began a hunger strike in January after being denied transfer to a high-security jail in Athens to be near his family.

His health has been in critical condition for the last two weeks. On Saturday, doctors treating Koufodinas at a hospital in Lamia, central Greece, said he was in "constant possible risk of sudden death" and had suffered "multiple accumulated disruption" to vital organs. —AFP ■



Hitman Dimitris Koufodinas began a hunger strike in January after being denied transfer to a high-security jail in Athens to be near his family. **PHOTO: AFP**

Zaghari-Ratcliffe back in Iran court on 'propaganda' charges



Richard Ratcliffe, husband of British-Iranian Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe jailed in Tehran since 2016, and his daughter Gabriella, attend a protest outside the Iranian Embassy in London on March 8. **PHOTO: AFP**

BRITISH-IRANIAN dual national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe appeared in a Tehran court Sunday to face new charges of "propaganda against the system", a week after she finished serving a five-year sentence, her lawyer said. The hearing has dashed the hopes of family and supporters for a swift release of the 42-year-old, in a case that has heightened

diplomatic tensions between London and Tehran.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said it was "unacceptable that Iran has chosen to continue a second wholly arbitrary case". According to Zaghari-Ratcliffe's lawyer, Hojjat Kermani, she is now being prosecuted for "propaganda against the system for having participat-

ed in a rally in front of the Iranian embassy in London" in 2009.

Zaghari-Ratcliffe spoke in court where she denied all charges, according to the Free Nazanin support campaign. "Nazanin... pointed out that all the accusations and evidence put forward had been part of her trial in 2016," the group said.

"She had already been tried and convicted on this evidence."

Kermani told AFP that "the hearing took place in a very calm and good atmosphere, in the presence of my client".

'Detention effectively open-ended'

Under Iranian law, the court has seven working days to issue a judgement, although delays are common. With the Islamic republic about to celebrate the Iranian new year, it means a ruling might not be released until March 30.—AFP ■

Protesters in Argentina attack bus carrying president

DOZENS of protesters kicked and threw rocks at a minibus carrying Argentine President Alberto Fernandez on Saturday as he visited an area devastated by forest fires, TV footage showed.

As he left a community

center in the town of Lago Puelo in the southern Patagonia region, Fernandez had to take refuge behind a wall of people as a crowd of demonstrators pushed toward him and his delegation.

The protesters later stopped

the bus carrying the president, punching and kicking it and throwing stones that broke windows in the vehicle, according to footage broadcast by the TN network and the newspaper Clarin.—AFP ■

70% of Japanese firms rethink overseas business strategy amid virus

AROUND 70 per cent of Japanese companies keen on pursuing overseas operations are rethinking or have reviewed their business strategy amid global risks such as the coronavirus pandemic, a recently released survey showed.

With the spread of COVID-19 battering the world economy since last year, 64.8 per cent of firms with business dealings abroad said they have been negatively impacted in terms of overseas sales for fiscal 2020 ending this month, according to Japan External Trade Organization.

COVID-19, which resulted in lockdowns and battered the world economy since last year, has thrust companies in Japan into restructuring their business plans and organization to weather the fallout from the virus.

Among other global risks, U.S.-China trade tensions as well as export restrictions by the United States and China have also stirred worries among the companies.

The survey found that 36.4 per cent are concerned in the next two to three years over Beijing's



Photo taken in January 2020 shows a display space put up by the Japan External Trade Organization at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. PHOTO: KYODO

strengthened export regulations, while 32.6 per cent expressed the same for U.S. export control restrictions.

In multiple answers, 42.5 per cent of respondents, including those in the food and clothing, apparel and electrical machinery sectors, cited a review of their sales strategy.

As a specific measure on how to revise such strategy, 60.9 per cent cited a review of their overseas customers.

Others are taking the digital route due to increased demand on digital

technology amid the pandemic, with 38.5 per cent looking to utilization of virtual exhibits and business meetings and 30 per cent with eyes on cross-border e-commerce.

The survey also found that the margin of decline for overseas sales -- especially in the apparel and retail sectors -- in fiscal 2020 dropped by 38.4 per cent on average, more than 10 points higher from that of domestic sales.

Although the proportion of firms looking at expanding their existing overseas operations for

the next three years has hit a record low, the JET-RO survey said the proportion for those still wanting to start an overseas foray in the future has only marginally decreased, underscoring how "eagerness to advance overseas has not waned."

Around 13,500 Japanese firms ranging from manufacturers to trading houses and in the communications sector were surveyed between the end of October to early December, with a total of 2,722 giving valid responses. —Kyodo ■

US air travel hits highest level since March 2020

AIRPORTS in the United States saw their largest number of passengers in a year on Friday, data showed, following a shuddering halt in travel brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Just over 1.35 million travelers were checked in at American airports on Friday, the most since March 15 last year, according to Transportation Safety Administration figures.

Despite the recovery, volume is still nearly half of what it would normally be this time of year.

The previous high since the onset of the coronavirus crisis was seen on January 3, with nearly 1.33 million passengers.

Air traffic had plunged to a record low 87,534 passengers on April 14. The United States has been battered by the world's biggest reported outbreak of the virus, with some 534,000 deaths. However, the country has administered over 100 million doses of the vaccine and new cases numbers have fallen from their highs over the holiday season. —AFP ■

FY 2020 earnings upgrades triple downgrades as vaccines ease caution

UPWARD revisions in earnings forecasts for this fiscal year by listed companies in Japan have been triple the downward ones, as cautious views on the impact of the new coronavirus eased toward the start of vaccinations in February, according to a credit research firm.

Improvement in their outlooks for the year to March 2021

helped pull the Nikkei stock index up above a 30-year high last month, Teikoku Databank said in a survey report of listed companies which close their books in March.

Some 802 companies had revised their sales projections by the end of February, of which 604 or 75 per cent raised their guidance, while 198 reduced it, according to the recent survey. —Kyodo ■

'Markets be damned!': Fed standing firm on inflation fears

SKITTISH investors have see-sawed between celebration about the expected US economic recovery and nail-biting over a possible price spiral, but the Federal Reserve is standing firm on keeping interest rates low.

In the balance between allowing faster growth -- and rising prices -- in order to restore some of the more than nine million jobs still missing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Fed Chair Jerome Powell's message has been clear: he wants to see more people back to work.

Analysts are expecting the Fed's policy-setting



Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell is unlikely to waver on maintaining stimulus policies despite market inflation fears. PHOTO: AFP

Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) to maintain its very "dovish" stance when it holds its two-day policy meeting next week.

Powell on Wednesday is expected to stress once

again that the Fed is willing to accept higher inflation to get back to full employment, a goal that took a decade to achieve following the 2008 global financial crisis. —AFP ■

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Dated: 15th March 2021

Canada jobs market bounces back, unemployment lowest in a year



Canada added a net 259,000 jobs in February, blowing past forecasts as the unemployment rate fell 1.2 percentage points to 8.2 percent — its lowest rate since March 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

CANADA added a net 259,000 jobs in February, blowing past forecasts as the unemployment rate fell 1.2 percentage points to 8.2 per cent — its lowest rate since March 2020, the national

statistical agency said Friday. The rebound, after two months of falling job numbers, coincided with a gradual lifting of pandemic restrictions as Covid-19 infections trended lower.

But employment was still down about 600,000 jobs from pre-pandemic levels, said Statistics Canada. “The quick turnaround is reminiscent of the first wave (of Covid-19 illnesses) when employment rebounded far faster than expected as the economy began reopening,” said CIBC analyst Royce Mendes. Mendes suggested it could lead Canada’s central bank to soon start tapering off its quantitative easing programme — bond purchases to boost money supplies, ending and investment. Several Canadian provinces have gradually lifted lockdowns ordered by public health authorities in December, allowing many businesses, cultural and recreational facilities, as well as restaurants to reopen.

But several parts of the economy continue to struggle. There were gains in both part-time (+171,000) and full-time (+88,000) jobs; the number of self-employed workers was unchanged for a second consecutive month; and the private sector added 226,000 new employees. In February, total hours worked increased by 1.4 per cent, driven mostly by gains in wholesale and retail trade.

More people also returned to their traditional workplaces, leaving their home offices set up during the pandemic, as schools and offices reopened. Earlier this week, the Bank of Canada revised its economic forecast, saying it expected growth in the first quarter to be positive rather than negative as it had predicted in January.—AFP ■

Americans to start seeing stimulus payments this weekend: officials

US workers and families will start to see stimulus funds go into their bank accounts as soon as this weekend, just days after President Joe Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion rescue plan into law, officials said Friday.

This third round of pandemic impact payments for many families will be more generous than the two prior rounds, with \$1,400 going to every individual earning up to \$75,000 or married couples earning up to \$150,000, and the same amount for each of their dependents.

That means a typical family of four will receive \$5,600.

The Internal Revenue Ser-

vice (IRS) will send payments directly to everyone who filed a tax return this year or last year, anyone who registered with the IRS or who is already receiving government benefits such as Social Security.

An IRS official said paper checks will go out later in the month for those who do not have direct deposit, but unlike his predecessor President Joe Biden’s name will not appear on those checks.

Treasury and IRS officials urged workers to file a tax return even if they would not normally do so since they also could be eligible for other benefits under



People wearing masks are crossing the road front of the World Bank Group building in Washington DC on September 25, 2020 amid the Covid-19 crisis. **PHOTO: AFP**

the stimulus package, including child tax credits or the Earned Income Tax Credit for low wage workers.—AFP ■

French Oscars turn political over virus shutdown

THERE was a fiercely political air at France’s annual celebration of cinema, Les Césars, on Friday as frustrations were unleashed over the months-long shutdown of theatres.

The country has seen mounting protests in recent days over the closure of cultural sites, with several theatres occupied by activists and students.

That frustration was centre stage at Friday’s awards, with actress Corinne Masiero stripping naked with the words “No culture, no future” written across her front as she presented the costume award.

Others used the stage to confront the government over



Frustrations were unleashed Friday over France’s months-long shutdown of theatres at the country’s annual celebration of cinema, Les Césars. **PHOTO: POOL/AFP**

its decision to keep cinemas shut since October, even as most oth-

er businesses have reopened. “My children can go to Zara

but not the cinema... it’s incomprehensible,” said Stéphane Demoustier as he picked up the Cesar for best screenplay for “The Girl With a Bracelet”.

The mood was set from the opening monologue, as mistress of ceremonies Marina Fois launched a scathing attack on Culture Minister Roselyne Bachelot.

“The minister hasn’t done nothing... Madame Bachelot, you released a book with your recipe for pasta and gorgonzola,” the actress joked, before striking a sad note to conclude: “What we miss is what unites us, the emotions that we experience together.”—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

German experts warn cases could peak again in April

EXPERTS from Germany’s Robert Koch Institute (RKI) warned on Saturday that further easing of lockdown restrictions could cause cases to increase rapidly again. This could lead to peaks in April which are similar to those experienced around Christmas.

In its latest situation report, the RKI said that daily reported cases could exceed 30,000 in the week starting 12 April. The news came as Germany recorded another 12,674 cases from Covid-19 and 239 deaths. The seven day average of cases per 100,000 increased from 72.4 to 76.1.—AFP ■

Mexico authorizes remdesivir to treat Covid

MEXICO on Friday approved the anti-viral drug remdesivir for emergency use treating Covid-19 patients in the Latin American country, one of the worst hit by the pandemic.

Regulatory agency Cofepris said it had authorized the medicine for use exclusively by hospitals and specialist doctors during the early stages of the illness.

Mexico joins other countries including the United States, Canada and Japan, as well as the European Commission, that have approved the treatment for use against the coronavirus.—AFP ■

DRC suspends use of AstraZeneca vaccine

THE DRC has suspended use of the vaccine, joining a small group of other countries who have paused use of the jab after reports of several people developing blood clots after they had been vaccinated.

DRC’s health minister Eteni Longondo said that “as a precautionary measure, we decided to postpone the date for the launch of vaccination in the DRC.”

DRC has received 1.7 million doses of the vaccine, and was intending to start distribution on 15 March.—AFP ■

Google slams Microsoft over stance in media payments

GOOGLE on Friday took aim at Microsoft, accusing its technology rival of “distraction” for siding with governments seeking to force tech platforms to pay media organizations for news content.

In a blog post, Google argued that Microsoft was trying to divert attention from a potentially devastating attack on Exchange emails servers by hackers taking advantage of software vulnerabilities.

The comments came amid a heated battle of words over efforts in Australia and elsewhere to require digital services to negotiate payments for news content.

Google and Facebook have resisted mandatory payments, while Microsoft has taken a more collaborative stance.

Microsoft president Brad Smith, in a letter to a congressional subcommittee hearing, blamed Google’s business model for “devouring” ad revenue on which news groups rely.

Google senior vice president of global affairs



Google had unusually harsh words for Microsoft, claiming its technology rival was “willing to break the way the open web works” by supporting mandatory payments to media organizations for news content. PHOTO: AFP

Kent Walker fired back in the blog post, saying of Microsoft: “They are now making self-serving claims and are even willing to break the way the open web works in an effort to undercut a rival.”

Walker added, “This important debate should be about the substance of the issue, and not derailed by naked corporate opportunism.”

In his letter, Smith lauded the role news or-

ganizations play in defending democracy and contended that the “internet gutted the already ailing local news business by devouring advertising revenue and luring away paid subscribers.”

Microsoft has lobbied for other countries to follow Australia’s lead in calling for news outlets to be paid for stories published online, a move opposed by Facebook and Google.

“News today is part of

the technology ecosystem, and all of us who participate in this ecosystem have both an opportunity and responsibility to help journalism flourish,” Smith said.

Backers of Google and Facebook have claimed that mandatory payments for news links would fundamentally change the way the internet works and ultimately be detrimental to free online services. — AFP ■

Jazz noodling: Hong Kong band streams inside cramped restaurant



Musician Justin Siu (C) playing double bass with his band in his local noodle shop in Hong Kong during a live streaming jazz performance between the tables. PHOTO: AFP

IN a densely populated city with notoriously high rents, Hong Kong’s musicians are used to playing cramped stages. But few venues are quite as pokey – or unorthodox – as Yuen Hing Lung noodles.

On a recent weekday night a jazz band was in full swing inside the

300-square-foot restaurant, perched on cola crates and using dining tables as music stands. The double bass player was squeezed into the space where the noodles are usually bubbling away.

There were no live spectators. Hong Kong has placed strict social

distancing limits to control the coronavirus pandemic and – like most forms of entertainment – live music has been decimated.

So instead the musicians inside the 47-year-old noodle restaurant streamed their gig online, asking for donations in return from the few hundred who logged in.

The get together was the brainchild of double bassist Justin Siu who invites various fellow jazz musicians for a gig at the restaurant once every two months. They have all seen their work evaporate over the last year. “We played party music, wedding music and now all of that is gone,” Siu told AFP. “They won’t have the budget to hire us for a while,” he ad-

ded, speaking of his usual clients.

Owner Paul So said he knew musicians were struggling, even more than restaurants, which have had to weather reduced opening hours and multiple lockdowns. “I don’t know much about music at all, but I love listening to it,” said So. “What I do is simply to offer him the venue and see if it gives him any sparks of creation,” the 61-year-old added, saying Siu is allowed to use the shop for free on the rare days off So takes. Unlike high-end hotels and jazz cafe where he used to perform, Siu said Yuen Hing Lung has a distinctly traditional vibe. Most of its decor is exactly the same as it was in the 1970s. —AFP ■

Obituary

Shri Siyaram Jee Arya aged 89, M.E, Sahityaratan Senior Lecturer, Y.I.T & former advisor of Defence Services Technological Academy PyinOoLwin residing at North Dagon, a prominent leader Myanmar Arya Samaj Movement, a great social person and thinker who rendered unique services for Vedic Religion and Culture and for upliftment and enhancement of Hindi Language and Literature, passed away on March 13, 2021 at 5:20 AM at OSC Hospital, North Okkalapa and cremated on the same day according to Vedic rites.

Yangon Arya Samaj HQR
Yangon, Myanmar.

Nigeria jihadists ambush military convoy, 19 troops dead

ISLAMIC State-aligned jihadists ambushed a Nigerian military convoy, killing 15 soldiers and four militia fighters in the northeastern state of Borno, security sources said Sunday.

The attack was the latest in a jihadist conflict which has killed 36,000 people and displaced hundreds of thousands in northeast Nigeria since it began more than a decade ago. “We lost 15 soldiers and four civilian JTF (militia) in the terrorists’ ambush in the forest near Gudumbali,” a military officer, who asked not to be identified, told AFP. He said 13 government fighters, including 10 troops, were wounded in the ambush. The 10-vehicle

convoy was on its way to Gudumbali from the town of Kukawa for a military operation against the insurgents when it came under fire, said another military source, who gave the same toll. “The casualties were brought to Maiduguri this afternoon,” the source told AFP, referring to the regional capital.

Militia leader Umar Ari said a vigilante leader in the area was among those killed. Nigeria’s army works with local militia forces as part of its battle against jihadists. “Four of our comrades were among the dead, including, Yusuf Baba-Idris, the head of Civilian JTF in Kukawa,” Ari said. —AFP ■

Kosovo’s abused ‘restaurant bears’ move to greener pastures

HAVING only just woken up from hibernation, a brown bear named Ero lazily strolls between the trees under a snow-capped mountain in central Kosovo, enjoying life alongside his chubby partner Mira.

Yet just eight years ago, he was a so-called “restaurant bear” – chained up in front of an eatery, forced to drink alcohol and serve as entertainment for customers in a bizarre and cruel practice that was popular in Kosovo after its late 1990s war with Serbia. Ero is one of nearly 20 bears rescued from that abuse who now live in a rolling 16-hectare

(40-acre) refuge near the capital Pristina, replete with trees, berry bushes, ponds and artificial dens.

Named the Pristina Bear Sanctuary, it is a rare conservation success story in Kosovo, where poverty, corruption and political crises are still overwhelming the former Serbian province 13 years after it declared independence.

That leaves the environment low on the scale of priorities, with plastic bags a common sight along rivers and roadsides, while coal plants pump black smog into the sky outside Pristina. —AFP ■

AFC Futsal Championship to be launched on 23 March

THE AFC Futsal Championship 2020 will be held in Kuwait on 23 March, according to an official announcement with the Asian Football Confederation.

The tourney will be held from 23 March to 3 April 2021 for its first round, officials said. The decision to hold the tourney this month was confirmed at the 1st Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Futsal & Beach Soccer Committee meeting which was held online and chaired by Mehdi Taj. The Beach Soccer Committee has agreed to hold the AFC Beach Soccer Asian Cup Thai-

land 2021 from 18-28 March 2021 for the first round and 28 April to 8 May 2021 for the second round.

The 2020 AFC Futsal Championship will be the 16th edition of the AFC Futsal Championship, the biennial international futsal championship organized by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) for the men's national teams of Asia. A total of 16 teams would have taken part in the tournament and the top three teams from the tourney will represent Asia at the FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup Russia 2021 in August.—GNLM ■



Futsal tournaments are popular not only in Asia but across the globe. PHOTO: AFP

Late birdies lift Westwood to lead at Players Championship

VEDRA BEACH (Florida) — Lee Westwood birdied two of the last three holes to seize a two-stroke lead over American Bryson DeChambeau after Saturday's third round of the US PGA Players Championship.

The 47-year-old Englishman dropped his approach to four feet at the par-5 16th and made the putt to seize the outright lead, then rolled in a 25-footer for birdie on the famed par-3 17th island green.

Westwood, who parred his way through the front nine, saved par from five feet at the 18th to finish off a bogey-free four-under par 68 and stand on 13-under 203 after 54 holes at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra



Britain's Lee Westwood reacts to sinking a birdie putt at the 17th hole Saturday on his way to leading after the third round of the US PGA Players Championship. PHOTO: AFP

Beach, Florida.

"I'm delighted with the way I played," Westwood said. "I needed to be patient and I

was.

I thought it was a professional round from a 47-year-old veteran." —AFP ■

Estrada outslugs Gonzalez to win title rematch in thrilling fashion

DELLAS — Juan Francisco Estrada unified the super fly-weight division on Saturday, earning redemption for a loss he suffered eight years ago with a thrilling split-decision victory over Roman "Chocolatito" Gonzalez in Dallas, Texas.

In the long-anticipated rematch of their 2012 fight, Mexico's Estrada went toe-to-toe for 12 rounds with the former pound-for-pound king and four-time division champ from Nicaragua. "I did enough to win," said Estrada. "I knew it was a close fight. I didn't know if I was up or down. "I needed to close out the fight in the last two

rounds. If he threw two or three punches then I had to throw two or three punches as well.

"Chocolatito is a great fighter. He deserves a trilogy"

Estrada retained his World Boxing Council title and snatched Gonzalez's World Boxing Association belt by winning on two of the judges' scorecards, 117-111 and 115-113. One judge gave the fight to Gonzalez, 115-113. When the decision was announced many in the crowd booed the result, especially the lopsided 117-111 score because they felt Gonzalez had done enough to win.—AFP ■

Chelsea stumble in Champions League chase as Zaha takes a stand

LONDON — Chelsea gave the chasing pack in the race for a place in next season's Champions League hope with a 0-0 draw at Leeds on Saturday, as Crystal Palace's Wilfried Zaha became the first Premier League player not to take a knee prior to kick-off of a 1-0 win over West Brom.

The Blues remain unbeaten in 12 games since Thomas Tuchel replaced the sacked Frank Lampard and kept a 10th clean sheet in that run at Elland Road.

However, Chelsea remain far from prolific at the other end despite the wealth of attacking talent at Tuchel's disposal.

"We created enough chances and enough

touches in the box to score one or two goals. Unfortunately, we didn't, so we have to live with a draw," said Tuchel.

"We were not clinical enough in our counter-attacks. We take a 0-0."

Kai Havertz kept his place as a false nine with strikers Timo Werner and Olivier Giroud left on the bench and had the visitors' best chance with a driven effort than Illan Meslier tipped over.

Leeds lost top scorer Patrick Bamford to injury in the first-half, but could have claimed victory themselves as Edouard Mendy made brilliant saves to deny Tyler Roberts and Raphinha.—AFP ■



Chelsea extended its unbeaten start under Thomas Tuchel to 10 Premier League games with a 0-0 draw at Leeds on Saturday. PHOTO: AFP