

Two killed in lorry accident,

driver arrested Madam Soniakaur Soniasingh's (right) 17-year-old son, Calvin, was one of two people killed after the orry they were travelling in crashed into the road divider along Old ırong Road on Thursday morning The driver, 25, has been arrested. He was taken to hospital along with the five other lorry passengers who



Concern over boost to crime agency's powers

Court to uphold the powers of the country's financial crime nvestigation agency has drawn flak, with legal experts concerned the authorities can detain suspects without bail on weak evidence. Critics of the government may also be targeted nder amended laws. A12

How to apply for first sovereign green bond Retail investors can apply to

purchase Singapore's first sovereign green bond from now until noon next Wednesday. Th 50-year Green Singapore Government Securities (Infrastructure), or Green SGS (Infra), was priced to yield 3.04 per cent. Find out what you need to know before applying. **B7** 

Thai lottery sales move online to curb overpricing The Thai government's recent launch of digital lottery tickets has seen five million tickets selling out n days. The move to online sales was aimed at countering the chronic ticket overpricing. The official retail price for each government lottery ticket is 80 bah

(S\$3.10), but vendors (left) hawk

them for at least 100 baht. **A20** 



Oats for breakfast works fine for swimmer Teong Teong Tzen Wei (left) has no

qualms making sacrifices in chasing his dreams. The Commonwealth Games 50m butterfly silver medallist has been having oats for breakfast every morning since last year. When asked. the swimmer said: "If vou really want something, you have

> Foreign Minister Wang Yi (centre) leaving before the start of a gala dinner of foreign ministers in Phnom Penh on Thursday.

Left: US Secretary of State Antony

attending the

Summit Foreign

Meeting in the

yesterday. PHOTOS: AGENCE

# Vaccinated people infected this year less likely to have long Covid

For those who do, symptoms tend to be less severe, do not last as long: Expert

**Joyce Teo** Senior Health Correspondent

Vaccinated persons in Singapore who had Covid-19 over this recent Omicron wave or the one earlier in the year are much less likely to develop long Covid symptoms, said Dr Barnaby Young, head of the Singapore Infectious Disease Clinical Research Network at the National Centre for Infectious Diseases

Long Covid has been described as a condition where people still experience symptoms such as chest pain, breathing difficulties and fatigue months after the initial infection has cleared.

"From our experience at NCID, for those who do develop long Covid, the symptoms also tend to be less severe and do not persist so long among vaccinated patients with Covid-19 due to the Omicron variant," he said. "While we do not have a diagnos

tic test or treatment specifically for long Covid, we do have some from April 2020 to August last LOWER RISK and usually perform some blood or imaging tests to exclude other symptoms in people infected with

His comments come as a new

study published in The Lancet the symptoms were already medical journal suggests that one present before their infection, in in eight adults with Covid-19 may order to identify the core sympexperience long Covid. "About one in eight patients re- This method allows them to ofwhat we have described in Singation for long Covid and provide a

pore, early in the pandemic," said reliable estimate of how likely it is The new study was conducted in said Professor Judith Rosmalen the Netherlands by researchers from the University of Groningen, from the University of Groningen. the study's lead author. They collected data – mostly be- In the study, about 21.4 per cent DR BARNABY YOUNG, head of the fore the Covid-19 vaccine roll-out of 1,782 participants who had Singapore Infectious Disease Clinical in that country – from online ques- Covid-19 experienced at least one Research Network at the National

The researchers compared the **We know that** vaccination reduces Covid-19 with those who were not. They also asked participants if **the risk of long Covid** by about 50 per cent, and the risk is also lower with Omicron, porting long Covid is similar to fer an improved working defini- also by around 50 per

A study conducted in the Netherlands suggests that one in eight adults with Covid-19 may experience long Covid, which is similar to what has been described in

Singapore, early in the pandemic, says Dr Barnaby Young, head of the Singapore Infectious Disease Clinical Research Network at NCID. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI

three to five months post-infec- months after a Covid-19 diagnosis

This compares with 8.7 per cent dizziness, back pain and nausea, of 4,130 uninfected people fol- the researchers said. lowed in the same time period, suggesting that one in eight Covid-19 well conducted and has good qual patients (12.7 per cent) in the gen- ity data, particularly longitudinal eral population experiences long- symptom data, collected before term symptoms due to Covid-19,

The core symptoms recorded were chest pain, breathing difficulties, pain when breathing, painful data was collected from people muscles, loss of taste and/or smell, who were infected relatively early tingling hands or feet, a lump in in the pandemic, he said. the throat, alternately feeling hot "We know that vaccination reand cold, heavy arms and/or legs duces the risk of long Covid by

tion with no further decline. Other said. symptoms that did not significantly increase three to five joyceteo@sph.com.sg

Dr Young said the study is very

and after acute Covid-19, and symptom data from a control group who did not have Covid-19. An important caveat is that the execution of four opposition ac-

about 50 per cent, and the risk is The severity of these symptoms also lower with Omicron, also by plateaued three months after infecaround 50 per cent," Dr Young

cation and be put on a very low-

calorie liquid diet for three

nonths, or less, should they

achieve the target weight loss ear-

"The first five days on the liquid

diet can be very difficult. They will

eel hungry and very tired," said Ms

Pauline Xie, NHGP's principal dieti-

ian, who is part of the study team.

By day six though, the body

starts to burn its stored fat, which

After three months, even if they

have yet to meet the weight loss tar-

used to pay for the Optifast liquid

diet, which retails at \$5 a portion,

will energise them, she added.

### **Ministers** concerned about limited progress on Myanmar peace plan

PHNOM PENH • Asean foreign min isters registered their disappoint ment that plans to resolve the political crisis in Myanmar have hardly mitment by the country's authori ties to implement a peace plan.

The ministers, in a joint commu nique issued yesterday, proposed that Asean leaders at their summit in November take stock of the military junta's progress in implementing the Five-Point Consensus, in order to decide on the way forward. The document said the ministers, who met on Wednesday, extensively discussed recent developments in Myanmar, including the

"We recommended that the Asean Summit assesses the progress towards the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus by the State Administration Council to guide the decision on the next steps," the ministers said. This is the second time in a row that an Asean joint communique, which usually avoids referring to the domestic situation in a mem-

tivists last month.

graph to the political situation in Myanmar, and the first time it has used such strident language. The consensus was drawn up in April last year to bring an end to the chaos following the February 2021 military coup that has killed more than 2,000 people.

ber country, has devoted a para-

Its five points are: an immediate end to violence in the country, dialogue among all parties concerned, the appointment of an Asean special envoy to facilitate mediation, provision of humanitarian assistance by Asean, and a visit by the special envoy to Myanmar to meet

"We reiterated our commitment to peace and stability in the region and expressed Asean's readiness to assist Myanmar in a positive, peaceful and constructive manner. including in the delivery of humanitarian assistance," the communique said. "We agreed that the special envoy... shall engage all Myanmar relevant stakeholders at the

The communique also addressed the ongoing war in Ukraine, with the Asean ministers saying they continue to reaffirm their respect for sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. Reiterating calls for compliance

with international law and the

United Nations Charter, the communique said that the leaders underlined the importance of an immediate cessation of hostilities and the creation of an enabling environment for the peaceful resolution of conflict. Hariz Baharudin

# Asean wants US, China to cool tensions: Vivian

Situation is dangerous for the region even as both sides aren't looking for conflict, he says

**Assistant News Editor** In Phnom Penh

Asean countries want temperatures between the United States and China to come down, espe- So for what it's worth, we've made the region bringing a real risk of South-east Asia – we actually want accidents and miscalculations, temperatures to come down." said Foreign Minister Vivian Bal-

conflict, but the situation now is warned, underscoring how impor- on Tuesday and Wednesday. the two superpowers get along. at the close of the 55th Asean For- ica's "one China" policy. eign Ministers' Meeting, where met their counterparts from key with the US on a range of issues, inpartners, including Chinese For- cluding talks on climate change. eign Minister Wang Yi and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Dr Balakrishnan said that during pore on Monday, noted that al- China and the US.

these talks, he observed that both though her visit to Taiwan was Recounting his conversation Speaker, it did take place at a very the ground, he added.

with Mr Wang on Thursday, Dr Balakrishnan said he conveyed that "the main danger is you've got a

lot of ships and planes and mis- **I know you have to** siles massed around there". "Even though I know you don't want to go to war, there is a danger confront, but we all of accidents and miscalculations have skin in this cially with military manoeuvres in the appeal that for the rest of us in **game. And we do want** China embarked on its largestget along. ever live-firing military drill in the Both sides are not looking for waters around Taiwan following a

controversial visit by US House dangerous for the region, he Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan SINGAPORE FOREIGN MINISTER tant it was for South-east Asia that Her visit has angered China, VIVIAN BALAKRISHNAN, warning which had warned against it and Dr Balakrishnan was speaking called it a provocation, while the to Singapore reporters yesterday US said it did not change Amermore divided, disruptive and Yesterday, Beijing announced ministers from the grouping also that it would suspend cooperation

Dr Balakrishnan, who met Mrs

Pelosi when she visited Singapolitically sensitive time for both This has contributed to raising sides were not looking for conflict. not the first by a US House the temperature and tensions on

serious confrontation, open

superpowers means high prices

less efficient supply chains and a

'WE ALL HAVE SKIN IN THIS GAME'

So those are the

make the appeal,

stakes. So when we

China takes the visit "very seri-

ides had to take a stand for poli

please have a care. compete, maybe even we are witnessing right now." China means the potential end of a said Dr Balakrishnan. peaceful and prosperous period, America and China to globalisation, economic integra-

cal reasons.

countries, including Singapore, to rapidly progress. But conflict between the super-

world, warned Dr Balakrishnan. when we make the appeal, please said in a statement. have a care. I know you have to compete, maybe even confront, but we all have skin in this game. longstanding partnership be-And we do want America and tween Singapore and the US, with China to get along," he said, referring to his request to Mr Wang. In response to a question on the matter, Dr Balakrishnan noted

He said he understood why both asked Asean member states to

Asean operates on the principle of an overlapping circle of friends, ously", noted Dr Balakrishnan. which works to find partnerships "They've couched it in terms of ter- that can benefit one or many counritorial integrity, sovereignty. And tries at the same time, he said. For you know, once you get into that, instance, while China is Asean's you actually have to take a very, trading partner and vice versa, a very strong stand, which is what lot of the trade involved consists of intermediate goods that are ulti-

Singapor Foreign

Vivian

Balakrishnar

speaking to

the media at

the Asean

Foreign

Ministers'

Meeting

yesterday PHOTO:

MINISTRY OF

**FOREIGN** 

AFFAIRS,

The breaking apart of the relamately also destined for markets tionship between the US and in the US and the European Union, "We are not looking for a line aid the minister. He said that at that bisects Asia, that forces coun-

the end of World War II, peace and tries to choose sides, invidious prosperity came about due to choices and false dilemmas." Dr Balakrishnan also met Mr tion and free trade. This allowed Blinken yesterday, and emphasised the need to avoid miscalculation and accidents, which could lead to an escalatory spiral and powers means high prices, less ef- destabilise the region. "He encourficient supply chains and a more aged greater engagement by the divided, disruptive and dangerous senior leadership and dialogue by all sides to build strategic trust,' "So those are the stakes. So the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr Balakrishnan and Mr Blinken also reaffirmed the excellent and the former welcoming the US' continued and constructive engagement in the region.

that neither China nor the US has harizbah@sph.com.sg

# Danger that Myanmar

could 'slide into civil war'

PHNOM PENH • There is a real danger that the political crisis in Myanmar could turn into a civil war, given how there has been no country had agreed to with Asean, said Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan yesterday.

"I have to be very frank. It's very dire. I think there is a real danger that the coup is sliding into a civil war. There's been no progress on the Asean Five-Point Consensus.'

The consensus was drawn up in

April last year to bring an end to the chaos following the February 2021 military coup that has killed more than 2,000 people. Speaking to Singapore reporters

at the end of the 55th Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) and related meetings, Dr Balakrishnan said Myanmar executed four activists last month despite appeals by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, in his capacity as Asean chair, and Asean Special Envoy on Myanmar Prak Sokhonn. "The timing – the recent execu-

tions, or even the earlier bombing by the Tatmadaw (armed forces) so soon after PM Hun Sen visits Myanmar, the special envoy goes to Myanmar, reflects, actually, the high level of cynicism or even outright disrespect for the role of Asean," said Dr Balakrishnan.

In the joint communique released after the AMM, the foreign ministers had proposed that its leaders, at their summit in Cambodia in November, take stock of the military junta's progress in implementing the consensus, in order to

decide the best way forward. "We can't interfere, but if they do not see that there is value in dialogue, national reconciliation and making use of Asean's good offices, then I'm afraid it's a very dire situation," Dr Balakrishnan said of the Myanmar junta. "How long will this go on for? I've heard estimates four years to 20 years. I don't

know, but I'm pessimistic." Asked how Asean would define and measure progress in the coming months, he said the ministers were formulating some options that he was not at liberty to share. "Let's not jump the gun, because if, for instance, in the remaining few months, they actually stop the violence, engage across the political spectrum, give access to our

special envoy... those will be positive steps," he added. "I remain pessimistic about what additional pressure would do for the Tatmadaw's thinking. In the end, they have to see that this is a dead end, and the only way the country can move forward is by national reconciliation." **Hariz Baharudin** 

#### **News analysis**

## Asean weathers regional political storm but its real test will be Myanmar



Tan Hui Yee Indochina Bureau Chief In Bangkok

This week's flare-up over Taiwan gave observers a front-row seat to Asean consensus-building. Individual Asean countries had contrasting views about the

Taiwan visit by United States House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, which China responded to with live-fire military exercises around the island.

While Laos inferred that the visit was "provocative" and Cambodia declared that Taiwan issues are China's "internal affairs", others like Indonesia urged restraint by all parties.

Within hours of these unilateral comments, the bloc managed to muster a statement on Thursday that did not mention Taiwan by name, but acknowledged member states' respective "one China" policies. It warned against actions that could lead to "miscalculation,

at ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, said: "Everyone has their own 'one China' policy to varying

> policy. So that statement... covers everybody's bases." Asean followed up on that feat by releasing its joint communique yesterday morning, before the foreign ministerial meetings ended later in the day, defying sceptics who were expecting delays over disagreements on how to tackle the political turmoil

within Myanmar. After all, the Myanmar junta's Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin was shut out from the meetings by the bloc's insistence on a "non-political representative" from the country. Calls for Asean to recalibrate its approach towards the crisis triggered by last year's military oup in Myanmar had become louder in the lead-up to the

meetings amid widespread

Ms Sharon Seah, a senior fellow

degrees. It depends on how you Myanmar's military-led State implement your 'one China' Administration Council (SAC) as

> Administration Council to guide charter.

calls for cessation of violence and utmost restraint – a clause ignored from the start by

> it tried to quell a resistant The communique kicks any decision on Myanmar down the road - to November when the Asean leaders' summit will be held. It recommended that "the Asean Summit assesses the progress towards the plementation of the Five-Point Consensus by the State

of four political prisoners.

Asean's "Five-Point Consensus"

on Myanmar, among other things,

the decision on the next steps". The communique also refers to Article 20 of the Asean Charter, which states that the Asean Summit can determine how decisions can be made where consensus cannot be achieved. The summit can also make the call if there is a serious breach of the

This amounts to a deadline of : dismay over the junta's execution sorts for the junta – and for Asean

- after which perhaps more contentious actions will have to e taken about Myanmar's crisis. Non-interference remains a key tenet of the Asean Charter, and the junta has condemned what it calls foreign interference in

Myanmar's internal affairs. "They are giving Myanmar these next three months to show some rogress. Just any progress. Very simple low-hanging-fruit progress such as to move Aung San Suu Kyi out of prison," said Ms Seah, referring to the deposed state counsellor. Asean special envoy Prak Sokhonn has so far made two visits to Myanmar but has been inable to meet significant members of the political pposition or Ms Suu Kyi. Allowing him to make a third visit to Myanmar and giving him access to all parties would

constitute major progress, said Ms

Seah. "If SAC can show that, then

it brings SAC back to the table."

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### tionnaires on 23 symptoms com- new symptom or a symptom that Centre for Infectious Diseases. monly associated with long Covid, was more severe than before, New programme aims to reverse patients' diabetes by helping them lose weight

Salma Khalik **Senior Health Correspondent** 

Diabetes can be reversed, even in loss were no longer diabetic. people who have had it for several A study in Britain has proven

that, and now, Singapore's Na-

tional Healthcare Group (NHG)

hopes to show it can also work for Its Diabetes Reversal Pro- The Lancet in 2018 and 2019. gramme aims to enable at least

The trigger to reversing diabetes is to significantly reduce the over a period of six months.

Associate Professor Lim Su Chi, it means that more than one in a senior consultant at Khoo Teck three were free of the disease. Puat Hospital (KTPH) and a princi- Diabetes is a major problem cost the country US\$1.8 billion pal investigator of the NHG prohere, with more than 400,000 (\$\$2.5 billion). gramme, said: "Weight loss is the people living with it. If nothing is In 2016, the Ministry of Health strongest link to remission. More done, the number is projected to (MOH) declared a war on diabetes than half of diabetics here are over- surpass one million by 2050 and to try to slow the rise in numbers.

weight or obese."

ter losing over 15kg had achieved Healthcare Group Polyclinics' (NHGP) principal dietitian; and Associate Professor better control of their sugar levels. The study, conducted between diet. Its findings were published in At the end of the first year of the

blindness, kidney failure and even able to maintain this, with only 36 per cent staying free of diabetes at the end of the second year. Associate Professor Tang Wern weight of people who are over- Ee, senior consultant at NHG Polyweight or obese, the target being a clinics (NHGP) and the pro-10 per cent cut or a 15kg reduction gramme's lead investigator, said that is still a very good outcome, as

The British study, called the Diabetes Remission Clinical Trial, had found that the majority who were able to achieve the target weight

to occur in the general population,

Tang Wern Ee, senior consultant at NHGP. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN 149 participants on a low-calorie **The trigger to reversing** diabetes is to significantly reduce the weight of some diabetics here to become study, 46 per cent were no longer people who are overweight free of a disease that can lead to diabetic. However, not all were or obese, the target being a 10 per cent cut or a 15kg reduction over a period of

and insufficient exercise.

Prof Tang said her team would like to see Singapore moving away from just treating the disease to getting more to become non-diabetic. participants aged 21 to 60 with a 27 and 45 who have had diabetes for less than six years and do not have complications from it. A normal BMI for Asians is 18.5 to 22.9.

or have my kidneys fail." in all, and recruitment is in progress. Diabetics who fit the pro-Half of the participants will be in file and wish to volunteer can find a control group who will continue details at https://for.sg/dmtrial to be cared for by their doctor. The other half will stop their med-salma@sph.com.sq

equipment and manpower for the Diabetics are unable to use up the Mr Hafiz Abdul Aziz, 36, is keen sugar in their blood. This can damto be on the programme as he finds gen to the heart and brain. Two ma-

get, they will be reintroduced to food, starting with one meal a day, and still on a low-calorie intake. The study is funded by a \$2.6 mil ion grant from the Tanoto Foun-Leading the Diabetes Reversal Programme are (from left) Associate Professor dation and \$1 million from the Lim Su Chi, senior consultant at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital; Ms Pauline Xie, National

> age blood vessels and reduce oxy- it difficult to lose weight on his own. The data engineer, who has a jor contributory factors are obesity BMI of 32, found out he had dia-"It was quite scary," he said. He is now eating less – he has a banana and a slice of bread for breakfast instead of his usual large plate of nasi The programme will recruit 100 rawon, or rice with black beef soup. He added: "Thinking long term, body mass index (BMI) of between I don't want to have my legs cut off

> > The study will take three years