MANUFACTURING SECTOR ON GROWTH TRAJECTORY TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PAGE-8 (OPINION)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

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Special flight arrives in Yangon with medical supplies, experts for fight against COVID-19



Workers unloading medical supplies from the special flight at the Yangon International Airport on 5 July, 2020. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

A SPECIAL relief flight carrying experts and personnel from five different organizations to provide support to the fight against the COVID-19 in Myanmar landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday morning.

On board of the flight which departed from Malaysia were disinfectants and personal protection supplies to be used in WFP's humanitarian operations, and nine experts from different organizations including UN and ICRC in Myanmar.

"Today, WFP's flight number nine has landed in Yangon. With the recent Government decree that has been extended until the end of July suspending international commercial flights, WFP flights continue to play an important role in linking Yangon with international connections. We are committed to continue the operation until the commercial sector stands up on its feet again," said Mr. Walid Ibrahim, WFP's Deputy Country Director.

The weekly flights, linking Yangon with international connections, have so far carried into Myanmar over 6 metric tonnes of essential supplies for the fight against COVID-19 including test kits, medical supplies, laboratory equipment and PPEs.—Zaw Gyi ■

No new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar on 5 July, total figure remains at 313

Updated at 8 pm, 5 July 2020

Total Case	New Case	Total Death Tally
313	0	6

Recovery Update on 5 July 2020 after two consecutive tests

Total Recovery	New Recovery	Discharged from Hospital
241	1	226

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 5 July 2020

New PUI
22

Ministry of Health and Sports



"People are the key"

Shwedagon Pagoda to enforce social distancing when it reopens

WHEN the Shwedagon Pagoda reopens, three-feet social distancing will be enforced in line with guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Sports, said U Aye Tun, a member of the board of trustees of the Shwedagon Pagoda.

The three-feet social distancing will be enforced for local visitors at the four prayer halls, Shwedagon Boe Boe Gyi and Lawkapala Mae Daw Gyi. When the pagoda reopens, visitors must wear a mask and wash their hands with soap and water. Temperature of the visitors will also be checked.

"The time of pagoda reopening will depend on the Stay Home period mandated by the government. When the Stay Home order expires, the pagoda is likely to reopen. Other nations also have new reported cases. Whether the Stay Home period will be extended, depends on the decision of the COVID committee [National-Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID – 19)]," said U Aye Tun, member of the board of trustees of the pagoda.

Four "Disinfection Chambers" will be installed at the Shwedagon Pagoda. All foreign visitors are required to enter the chambers before entering the pagoda.

"Foreign visitors must enter the disinfection chambers," said U Aye Tun. He added that any local visitor who has a cough must enter the chambers too, even if his or her body-temperature is normal.

"Entrance fee for a foreign visitor is K10,000. Masks will be distributed free of charge to them," he said.—Soe Myint Aung

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



A disinfection chamber is seen at a visitor entrance of the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon. **PHOTO : SOE MYINT AUNG**

170 Myanmar citizens repatriated from Philippines, India



Myanmar nationals returned from the Philippines queue for immigration process at the Yangon Internaitonal Airport on 5 July 2020. **PHOTO : MNA**

A total of 170 Myanmar nationals – 122 from the Philippines and 48 from India – arrived back home by relief flights in last two days.

Myanmar Airways International (MAI)'s relief flight carrying 122 Myanmar citizens from the Philippines landed at the Yangon International Airport yesterday.

Of them, 15 are those who stranded in the Philippines and 107 are those who were working on the ships of Conquest Dream and Holland America of Carnival Cruise Line.

Air India's relief flight carrying 48 Myanmar nationals stranded in India arrived at the Yangon International Airport on 4 May.

On arrivals at the airport, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region government provided the returnees with proper medical examination and arranged 21-day quarantine for them.

The ministry has been working with Myanmar embassies in foreign countries and local ministries concerned to bring back citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international commercial flights, in accordance with the guidance of the National-Level Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19.

Until now a total of 6, 818 Myanmar citizens were repatriated from foreign countries.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

728 Myanmar nationals return from Thailand via Myawady border on 5 July

A total of 728 Myanmar migrant workers returned from Thailand through the Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) on 5 July, according to local authorities.

Kayin State Hluttaw's Deputy Speaker Daw Nan Thuzar Win, Hluttaw Representative U Thant Zin Aung, District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung, Township Administrator U Phyo Zaw Ko Ko, and officials concerned checked their health condition and fulfilled their requirements.

A total of 41,088 Myanmar migrant workers have returned home through the border crossing since 1 May 2020.

Yesterday's returnees include 417 males and 311 females from different regions and states.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



A Myanmar woman returned from Thailand (L) stands before a thermal imaging camera for body temperature check at the Myawady border gate on 5 July 2020. **PHOTO : HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

Demand should be in accordance with rules and disciplines



Now is a time when political consciousness is emerging, with some wavering. Our government complies with demands as much as possible. Like the parents who acquiesce to their children and take action against them if they reach beyond disciplines, our government will take action against those who are undisciplined and take more opportunities than they should. Demand your needs in accordance with rules and disciplines. We will comply with them in accordance with the rules.

(Excerpt from the speech made by Bogyoke Aung San in Natmauk on 25 March 1947)

Phakant landslide investigation body visits families of deceased, injured

THE investigation body into the landslide that occurred at a mining site in Phakant, Kachin State, on 2 July went to investigate at the site of the incident yesterday morning.

The landslide killed 172 workers and injured 54 others at a mining site near Wheykha Village, Seikmu Village-tract in Lone Khin, Phakant Township. The investigation body was formed with Union Minister U Ohn Win as Chairman and Union Ministers Lt-Gen Soe Htut and Dr Win Myat Aye as members along with Kachin State Chief Minister Dr Khat Aung.

The investigation body was briefed on the cause of the landslide and the current situation by U Tint San Aung, General Manager for Myanma Gems Enterprise in Phakant. The Union Ministers then met with 16 families of the deceased and offered their condolences. They also handed over financial support from the National Disaster Management Committee, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Kachin State Government, Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association, and Myanmar Thura Gems Co. Ltd.



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye provides cash assistance to a family member of landslide victim in Phakant, Kachin State on 5 July 2020 . **PHOTO: MNA**

The investigation body then visited 12 people who were injured in the landslide at Wheykha Station Hospital and handed over financial support from the National Disaster Management Committee, Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and Kachin State government. Furthermore, Myanmar Gems and Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association and Myanmar Thura Gems Co. Ltd. also provided financial support to the injured workers. From there, the investigation body visited sites in Sapaw Hmaw, Maw Wam Gyi, Maw Wam Lay and Hmaw Sarsi Hmaw. They observed the potential for disaster at the locations and the workers working in precarious conditions and discussed preparations to mitigate disaster.

The investigation body visited the gems entrepreneurs association's office in Phakant next and discussed the tasks and duties of the investigation body with association officials and local elders.

The National Disaster Management Committee and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement are providing K96.8 million to the victims of the landslide at a rate of K500,000 for each family of the 172 deceased and K200,000 for 54 who were injured.

The Kachin State government provided K22.6 million at a rate of K100,000 for each family of the deceased and injured while the gems association and Myanmar Thura Gems company provided K750,000 for each family of the deceased and K375,000 for each person who was injured.

Next, the National Disaster Management Committee provided K11 million as financial support to the Red Cross, members of the Auxiliary Fire Brigade and local humanitarian aid organizations that helped in the search and rescue procedure during the landslide.

Afterwards, the investigation body held a meeting with relevant departments and organizations concerning their next course of action at a meeting room in Sky Hotel. —MNA ■

(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)



Myanmar nationals returned from foreign countries (L) stand in a row at the Minbu District's Sports Stadium on 5 July before they were sent back to their native regions. **PHOTO: MAUNG MAUNG (MINBU)**

41 returnees transported back to Rakhine State

A fresh batch of 41 Myanmar nationals who returned from neighbouring countries through border towns arrived in Minbu, Magway Region yesterday morning, according to Minbu Myoma Police Station. The returnees are from the Rakhine State. Minbu District Stadium received them.

The 41 returnees—23 are men and 18 are women—worked at paper factories, clothing factories, pineapple factories and construction sites in border towns.

After temporarily keeping them at the Minbu District Stadium, police officers led by the Myoma Police Station Police Captain Myint Zaw and officials made arrangement to help them go home. The returnees were transported back to Rakhine State via Minbu-Ann-Sittway Road.

Before departure, the returnees received medical checks.

From Minbu, a total of 5,008 returnees (3,173 male and 1,835 female) were transported back to the Rakhine State between 5 May and 5 July this year. —Maung Maung (Minbu) ■

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

CHIEF EDITOR
Aungthu Ya
aungthuya@gnlm.com.mm

DEPUTY CHIEF EDITOR
Aye Min Soe
dce@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR EDITORIAL CONSULTANT
Kyaw Myaing

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Aung Khin

LOCAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS EDITORS
Ye Htut Tin
editor1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
Aung Htein
Tun Tun Naing
intlnews@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

SENIOR TRANSLATOR
Zaw Htet Oo

TRANSLATORS
Hay Mar Tin Win, Ei Myat Mon,
Kyaw Zin Lin, Kyaw Zin Tun

REPORTER
Nyein Nyein Ei,
reporter1@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

PHOTOGRAPHER
Kyaw Zeya Win @ Phoe Khwar
Kyaw Zeya

COMPUTER TEAM
Thein Ngwe, Zaw Zaw Aung,
Kay Khaing Win,
Sanda Hnin, Zu Zin Hnin,
Thein Htwe, Nyi Lin Thu

EDITORIAL SECTION
(+95) (01)8604529,
Fax – (+95) (01) 8604305

CIRCULATION & DISTRIBUTION
San Lwin, (+95) (01) 8604532,
Hotline - 09 974424114

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
(+95) (01) 8604530,
Hotline - 09 974424848
marketing@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
subscription@globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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gnlmdaily@gmail.com
www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com
www.facebook.com/TheGNLM

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www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com

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Footprint, ancient rock art, stone Buddha statues discovered in Kyunhla, Sagaing Region

BUDDHA footprint, ancient rock art, ancient stone statues have been discovered a mile away from the southeast of Htanpingon Village of Kyunhla Township in Kantbalu District of Sagaing Region.

While a grower from Htanpingon Village was cleaning up the farm, Buddha footprint, stone Buddha statues, pots, bells and rock arts have been found on 23 May.

A team led by officer U Zaw Lin of the Department of Archaeology and National Museum (Sagaing) under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture has been conducting discovery tours from 1 July. The Buddha footprint has been conserved at what researchers consider to be a Konbaung dynasty, a resident monk of Arthawkayanthi Monastery.



Photo shows the Buddha's footprint that was discovered near the Htanpingon Village in Kyunhla Township on 23 May 2020. **PHOTO: MYO WIN NYO (KYUNHLA)**

The boards of pagoda trustees, the village head and local people are planning to conserve them. The statues, bells and rock arts have been kept at the monastery.— Myo Win Nyo (Kyunhla)
(Translated by E'i Myat Mon)

MR to resume train services to Bago, Ye from Yangon

MYANMA Railways (MR) will resume passenger train services from Yangon to Bago and Ye in Mon State today (6 July), according to the MR office in Yangon.

MR's No 14 RBE down train that departs from Bago Station at 5:35 am arrives at the Yangon Central Railway Station at 8:40 am, while No.13 up train that departs from Yangon at 5:05 pm arrives at the Bago Station at 7:55 pm.

MR's No 81 and No 82 trains that resumed their operations between Yangon and Mawlamyine on 16 June will run to Ye in Mon State starting from 6 July.

No81 up train that leaves from Yangon Central Railway Station at 8:15 pm arrives at the Mawlamyine at 6:30 am on the following day. The train departs from Mawlamyine at 7 am and arrives in Ye at 12:40 pm.



An MR's train is seen running through a railway bridge.
PHOTO: AUNG THURA

No 82 down train that leaves from Ye Station at 2:45 pm arrives in Mawlamyine at 8:30 pm. The train departs from Mawlamyine at 9 pm and arrives in Yangon at 6:45 am on the following day.

A train ticket for Yangon-Bago costs K 600, while a ticket of Yangon-Ye route is K 6,450 for upper class and K 3,250 for ordinary class.

The operation of the trains – No141 up train and No 142 down train on Thazi-Nyaungshwe route and No139 up train and No140 down train on Gantgaw Kalay route – will also resume on 6 July.

The schedules of the trains can be viewed at the stations concerned. — Aung Thura
(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Illegal drugs seized in Pinlaung, Kyaukme, Tachilek tsps

A joint task force with officers a local anti-drug squad arrested a person named Mya Min Thu (a) Zin Min Ko near Lein Li suspension bridge in Pinlaung Township at 11:30 am on 4 July after discovering 599,400 psychotropic tablets, 5 kilos of the drug ice (worth K1,623.5 million) and a mobile phone from his car.

Similarly, DED officers arrested two people identified as Hlaing Moe Win and Moe Aung (a) Kyaw Hlaing Soe near the Oriental tollgate in Kyaukme Township at 7 pm on the same day after confiscating 3,300 psychotropic tablets, K42,000 in cash and a mobile phone from their motorcycle.

In the afternoon of the same day, security forces discovered 109,800 psychotropic tablets, 2 pistols with 3 corresponding cartridges and 24 bullets, and a camouflage pistol holster located 1,500 meters southeast of Huipu village in Yay Pu San village-tract, Tachilek Township. Authorities have opened cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force. — GNLM
(Translated by Zaw Htet Oo)

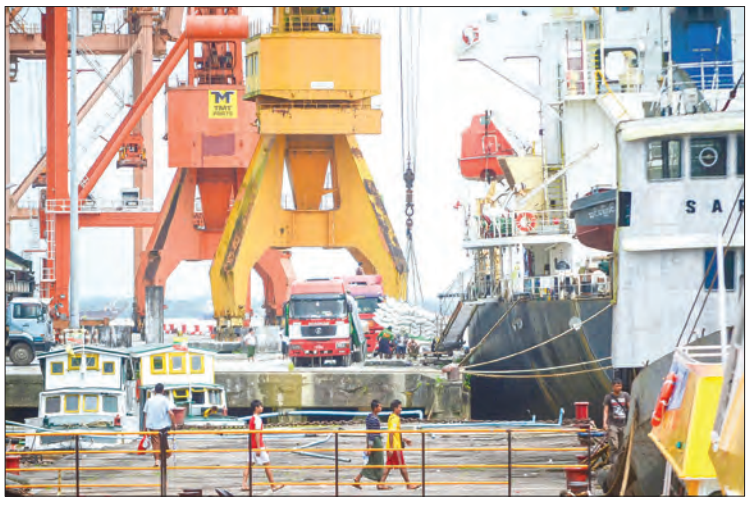


Mya Min Thu (a) Zin Min Ko is seen together with confiscated drugs. **PHOTO: MPF**

Myanmar rice exports exceed 2 mln tonnes as of 19 June

THE volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 October and 19 June in the current fiscal year crossed 2.088 million metric tonnes, worth US$621 million, according to the Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

Myanmar's maritime trade constituted 86.08 per cent of rice exports and generated an estimated income of US$539.57 million as of 19 June in the current fiscal year, showing an increase of $184 million against last year, as per data from the Commerce Ministry.



Rice sacks are being loaded onto a vessel at a port in Yangon.
FILE PHOTO/ GNLM

Earlier, border trade was relatively high compared to sea trade in terms of rice exports. Since the previous financial year, border trade has dropped, and currently, it accounts for just 13.92 per cent of the total rice exports. Rice exports through the border gates have generated an estimated $81.47 million in the current financial year, which plunged from $167 million registered during a-year ago period.

Myanmar primarily exports rice to China through the borders. However, trade in agricultural products has been halted on account of China clamping down on illegal trade.

In the current financial year, Myanmar has shipped rice to 66 foreign markets. China is the main buyer of Myanmar rice. The country's broken rice has been sent to 57 foreign countries, mostly to Belgium.

ASEAN countries constitute 17 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports. The European Union countries account for over 19.74 per cent of rice exports, while 32.22 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to African countries.

According to the work coordination meeting held on 26 June, 150,000 tonnes of rice will be exported each in July and August. And, 100,000 tonnes of rice will be sent to the external market in September, totalling rice export quota of 400,000 tonnes.

The Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar Inspection and Testing Service (MITS), the authorized organization of the State and MRF implemented rice reserve scheme on 30 April. The state has purchased about 13,000 tonnes of rice so far, in line with the set rules and regulations, said Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo of the Ministry of Commerce.

Additionally, starting from July, each export quota limit for companies is to be lifted and licence permit under contract was discussed and approved.

Regarding the State's rice reserve scheme, the rice volume for reserve will be cut to 5 per cent from 10 per cent of total rice export. This action will come into effect on 1 July 2020.

Before seeking the export licence, the companies must provide 2.5 per cent of total rice export as the reserved rice, and then, the remaining 2.5 per cent must be sent to the State's warehouses within 15 days after receiving the licence, as per decisions of the coordination meeting.

Moreover, the meeting decided that the validity of rice export licence is extended up to 60 days from the earlier term of 45 days, MRF stated.

Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF) has been accelerating its effort to meet rice export target of 2.4 million tonnes in the current financial year 2019-2020, according to MRF. — GNLM

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Sino-Myanmar border trade falls by $95.7 mln in Q3 2019-2020FY

SINO-MYANMAR border trade has registered a decrease of US$95.7 million between 1 October and 26 June in the current fiscal year 2019-2020, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

Data from the Ministry of Commerce shows the value of Sino-Myanmar border trade at all five borders touched over $4.4 billion in the current fiscal, which significantly plunged from over $4.5 billion recorded in the year-ago period.

This FY, border trade values totalled $3.6 billion at Muse, $120 million at Lwejel, $391 million at Chinshwehaw, $254 million at Kampaiti, and over $4.31 million at Kengtung. The Commerce Ministry's data showed a drop in trade value at all those gates.

The decline in trade is attributed to the trade suspension and trade delay due to the tight security measures of the coronavirus outbreak and spread. At present, China has been stepping up border control measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease. Therefore, Chinese buyers do not come to Myanmar borders in light of viral infection fears, forcing Myanmar truck drivers to leave for Wanding area to sell the goods.

As a result of this, the traffic congestions occur both in two sides; Muse and Kyalgaung borders, causing a long queue on road, said Police Deputy Superintendent Chit Sein of No 123 Traffic Police Force (Muse).

The transport delays caused damage to the quality and doubled the truck fares. The growers and traders are suffering losses during the pandemic, according to a border depot.

Next, the export of agricultural products is often halted, on account of China clamping down on illegal goods. Myanmar merchants are facing difficulties in exporting goods to China through the legitimate channel as they find the tax levied by China is too high. Therefore, rice confiscation and price manipulation are occurring often at the border. 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 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.



Trucks carrying goods are seen at the Kyin San Kyawt Terminal near Muse.
PHOTO: VAN YO HTAN (MUSE-IPRD)

Myanmar exports rice, sugar, pulses, sesame seeds, corn, dried tea leaves, fishery products, minerals, and animal products to China while it imports agricultural machinery, electrical appliances, iron and steel-related materials, raw industrial goods, and consumer goods from the neighbouring country. — Htet Myat

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade at Myawady plunges to $690 mln as of 26 June

TRADE between Thailand and Myanmar via the Myawady border between 1 October and 26 June in the current financial year plunged to US$690.667 million from $910.6 million registered in the year-ago period, according to data from the Ministry of Commerce.

Over the past nine months, exports through the Myawady border reached $309.7 million, while imports fell short of $600.87 million.

This year, Myanmar has been exporting corns to Thailand through Myawady border. Myanmar's corn exports to Thailand significantly soared to over 1.2 million tonnes through borders between Myanmar and Thailand during October and May period in the current FY2019-2020, an official of the Ministry of Commerce said.

Of the seven border trade points between Myanmar and Thailand, the Hteekhee, Myeik and Mawtaung borders have witnessed a decrease in trade in the current financial year while the remaining borders have reported an increase in trade.

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. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Trade Mark Ads
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Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung inspects Nyaungdon embankment project

UNION Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung inspected Nyaungdon embankment project on 4 July.

The Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems acting Director-General U Win Hlaing, and relevant officials accompanied the Union Minister to Nyaungdon.

At a hall of the primary school in Thoon Phayar Gyi Pine Ward, Nyaungdon, officials of the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems detailed about Nyaungdon stone pitching embankment project, which has been carried out by Ah Yone Oo construction company and completed 93 per cent, and the Htupayone Pagoda embankment, which will be completed 100 per cent on 30 July, in Lay Myet Hna Township in the Ayeyawady Region.

After that, the Ayeyawady Region Electricity, Energy, Industry and Transportation Minister U Win Htay, the Directorate of Water Resources and Improvement of River Systems acting Director-General U Win Hlaing and other relevant officials explained the Pathein Strand Road extension project which is funded by the regional government.

After hearing the reports, the Union Minister said that the damage of the Nyaungdon embankment occurred on 7 January, 2020, and urged relevant officials to exert efforts for timely completion of the embankment project.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)



Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung and officials inspect Nyaungdon embankment project on 4 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

HUGE SPIKE

India reports record daily cases in coronavirus battle

INDIA added a record number of coronavirus cases Sunday, as the world's fourth worst-hit nation opened a huge treatment centre with 10,000 beds in the capital to fight the epidemic.

The health ministry reported just under 25,000 cases and 613 deaths in 24 hours -- the biggest daily spike since the first case was detected in late January.

The surge took India's total tally to more than 673,000 cases and 19,268 deaths.

It came as the capital New Delhi started treating patients at a spiritual centre converted into a sprawling isolation facility and hospital with 10,000 beds, many made of cardboard and chemically coated to make them waterproof.

About the size of 20 football fields, the facility on the outskirts of the city will treat mild symptomatic and asymptomatic cases.

State government officials fear Delhi, home to 25 million people, could record more than half-a-million cases by the end of the month.

The city has repurposed some hotels to provide hospital care. It is also converting wedding halls and has several hundred modified railway coaches standing by.

A strict lockdown in place since late March has gradually been lifted, allowing most activities as the economy nose-dived amid the shutdown.

SOURCE: AFP



Workers arrange machines at a hospital recently set up for COVID-19 coronavirus patients in Mumbai on July 2, 2020. **PHOTO : AFP**

PUTTING ELECTRONIC BRACELETS ON TRAVELERS

Jordan slaps wristbands on arrivals to monitor virus quarantine



Jordan began putting electronic bracelets on travelers who have recently arrived in the country to ensure that they observe home-quarantine. (Queen Alia International Airport's Twitter)

JORDAN began putting electronic bracelets Saturday on travelers who have recently arrived in the country to ensure that they observe home-quarantine against the spread of coronavirus, an official said.

People arriving in Jordan must isolate for 14 days at hotels designated by the authorities on the shores of the Dead Sea, west of the capital Amman.

After that period, they must self-isolate for an additional 14 days at home, according to Nizar Obeidat, spokesman for Jordan's virus task force.

He told state-run Al-Mamlaka television that "the use of the electronic bracelet began on Saturday for those self-isolating at home" in order to ensure quarantine rules are respected.

Jordan imposed tough measures, including curfews and the deployment of drones, to curb the spread of COVID-19, before easing policies in early June.

The kingdom has so far registered 1,147 coronavirus infections, including only 10 deaths.

But health authorities have almost daily been reporting new cases among Jordanians and foreigners entering the country.

They have also maintained measures such as social distancing and the compulsory use of face masks in most public places, with those breaking the rules fined.

SOURCE: AFP

THOUSANDS KILLED EVERY YEAR

Climate change 'fuelling deadly India lightning strikes'



Around 215 people - farmers, rural labourers and cattle graziers - have now died from strikes in the country's poorest state. **PHOTO: AFP**

LIGHTNING strikes killed 147 people in the north Indian state of Bihar over the last 10 days, officials said Sunday, warning of more extreme weather conditions to come, driven by climate change.

Around 215 people -- farmers, rural labourers and cattle graziers -- have now died from strikes in the country's poorest state since late March, authorities said.

"I was informed by weather experts, scientists and officials that rising temperatures due to climate change is the main cause behind the increasing lightning strikes," Bihar's Disaster Management Minister Lakshmeshwar Rai told AFP.

Twenty-five people died on Saturday, he said.

The Indian Meteorological Department has warned of more lightning in the next 48 hours.

Lightning strikes during the annual monsoon that runs from June to September are fairly common in India.

But officials said this year's toll in Bihar has already surpassed the total number of deaths recorded annually for the state over the past few years, even though the monsoon season has just started.

Last year, 170 people were killed in lightning strikes during the monsoon period.

Bihar agrometeorologist Abdus Sattar told AFP the lightning and thunder was caused by large-scale instability in the atmosphere, fuelled by temperature rises and excessive moisture.

State authorities rolled out a mobile phone app they said helps predict possible lightning strikes. But many poor farmers do not own smartphones.

In neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, just over 200 people have been struck and killed by lightning since April, according to officials.

More than 2,300 people were killed by lightning in India in 2018 according to the National Crime Records Bureau, the most recent figures available.

The monsoon is crucial to replenishing water supplies in South Asia, but also causes widespread death and destruction across the region each year. ■

SOURCE: AFP

UNREALISTIC

Prostitution in post-lockdown Greece is 'Russian roulette'

A central Athens brothel was buzzing with clients on a recent hot July afternoon, and its Venezuelan workers were relieved to have the business.

Sex workers there have had a steady stream of customers since mid-June, when they were allowed to reopen their doors after a three-month ban to control the spread of coronavirus.

While most Greeks are social distancing and keeping their contacts to a minimum, many prostitutes have little choice but to return to work.

"I tried to sleep as much as possible in order to forget my hunger during these three months," said Bella, who has a child, as another woman cleaned and ventilated her room for the next client.

A list of strict hygiene and safety rules were announced by the Greek authorities to protect clients and the workers, who are more exposed to the risk of infection than those in almost any other profession.

But the measures are unrealistic, the women told AFP.

"They are ridiculous," said Dimitra Kanellopoulou, president of Greece's sex workers' association.



Strict hygiene and safety rules announced by the Greek authorities are unrealistic, the sex workers said. **PHOTO: AFP**

"They tell you not to have a handshake in the waiting room, and then you go inside the room and everything happens," she said. "What is the point?"

Sex workers are advised to "ensure distance" and avoid "face-to-face contact", while wearing a face mask "could be introduced as part of a game", the rules suggest.

'Worst time for profession'

"It's a joke. How is a girl going to please a customer with a mask on? Should she put a zipper in the mask?" wondered Katerina, who runs another brothel in downtown Athens.

She laid a new paper sheet on one bed, which she said would be destroyed immediately once the client entered the room.

The list of measures also includes an obligation to keep all clients' contact details in a sealed envelope for four weeks for tracking and tracing.

Sheets of blank white paper are taped on the sofas in the waiting room to remind clients to keep their distance.

One client entered the building wearing a mask around his neck, a reminder that the pandemic is not over.

"Our job is basically Russian roulette. You put yourself and your family in danger, but either way you would starve," said Anna Kouroupou, a transgender woman who heads Red Umbrella Athens, an initiative supporting sex workers.

"This is probably the worst time ever for the profession," she said.

"Things were really bad when AIDS broke out, but back then after a few months we knew that wearing a condom would keep us safe. Now there is no way to protect ourselves," she added.

Legal limbo

The pandemic has laid bare the legal limbo in which brothels operate in Greece, where the majority of them have been left without state aid.

Under Greek law, in order for a brothel to operate legally it should be at least 200 metres (650 feet) from public spaces such as hospitals, parks, churches, schools and stadiums.

In a dense city, that restriction makes virtually any existing brothel illegal. According to Red Umbrella Athens more than 600 brothels operate illegally in Greece.

SOURCE: AFP

RECOVERIES RECORDED

COVID-19 recoveries globally exceeds 6 millions: Hopkins University

THE worldwide number of COVID-19 recoveries has surpassed 6 million, according to data collected by US-based Johns Hopkins University.

According to the data, by 07:00 GMT on Sunday, the number of COVID-19 fatalities worldwide totaled 530,898, while the total number of infections stood at 11,272,342.

Brazil and the United States are the top two countries in terms of the total number of registered coronavirus cases (the United States has the highest total of over 2.8 million COVID-19 cases).

SOURCE: ANI

Manufacturing sector on growth trajectory to encourage economic recovery

"MYANMAR'S manufacturing sector showed signs of recovery in June despite COVID-19 according to PMITM survey from IHS Markit. Output & new orders increased for first time four months. IHS Markit's Myanmar Manufacturing PMI is a composite indicator of manufacturing performance."

Union Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations U Thaung Tun sent this message on the social media platform Twitter on 2 July.

Myanmar's manufacturing sector suffered from a huge slump between February to May, reaching nation 29 on IHS Markit's PMI in April and 38.9 in May. IHS Markit is a London-based global market and industrial sector information provider that collects information, performs research, and provides technical solutions.

These numbers are the second lowest recorded on the PMI since the survey began in December 2015. However, the numbers rose to 48.9 for June. Myanmar averages a little above 50 on the index and remained between 50 to 55 in all of 2019.

> The MIC is giving priority to investments in garment manufacturing going forward as these are labour intensive industries likely to create a large number of jobs in efforts to alleviate the impacts from the COVID-19.

Trevor Balchin, Director of Economic Indices at IHS Markit, said Myanmar's manufacturing sector took a catastrophic plunge in May and this can be attributed to travel restrictions and temporary closure of businesses.

Job layoffs in May also reached new records. Unemployment issue is the most serious problem in the world and in Myanmar as well.

Foreign investor interest in Myanmar's garment manufacturing sector is still strong despite a fall in the volume of garment exports in 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Of the 178 foreign enterprises endorsed by the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) and permitted to invest in Myanmar between October 1 last year and 31 May this year, more than three quarters channelled capital into the manufacturing sector, according to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA).

The MIC is giving priority to investments in garment manufacturing going forward as these are labour intensive industries likely to create a large number of jobs in efforts to alleviate the impacts from the COVID-19.

Myanmar is in the uptrend of foreign investment, and more capitals will flow into the country in the post COVID-19 period; the volume of investment could reach $5.8 billion, the expected target in this year. Manufacturers that are able to produce face masks and other personal protective equipment related to COVID-19 will also be given priority.

Enquiries from investors are still flowing in even though garment exports fell to a mere $2.7 billion between 1 October, 2019, and 31 May, 2020, representing a $24 million decline from the same period a year before due to order cancellations from the European Union.

In this situation with signs of recovery, the authorities are obliged to create job opportunities as soon as possible and businesses should also be flexible in moving forward and tracking how coronavirus has affected their business on a regular basis.

BUSINESS SENTIMENT

Japan's economy still a long way from recovery amid epidemic

Haruhiko Kuroda, governor of the BOJ, said the economy is expected to shrink considerably in the second quarter. The International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook also forecast that Japan's economy will shrink by 5.8 percent this year.

THE Japanese economy will see some improvement thanks to the government's massive stimulus program, but in the long run the recovery is likely to be slow due to a number of factors, experts here have said.

Since the COVID-19 epidemic swept the world, the Japanese economy has been hit hard in the first half of this year with all indicators declining.

Personal consumption, which accounts for more than half of Japan's economy, fell for the seventh consecutive month in April compared to a year earlier. Real household consumption plunged 11.1 percent in April from a year earlier, the biggest drop since comparable data became available, according to statistics released by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications in June.

Core machinery orders, a leading indicator of private investment in equipment, fell 12 percent in April from a month earlier, far surpassing the 0.4-percent drop in March and exceeding market expectations, according to data released by the Cabinet Office in June.

Japan's industrial and mining production index decreased 8.4 percent in May from a month earlier to 79.1, hitting a new low, according to preliminary statistics released by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) on Tuesday. So far, Japan's industrial and mining production has declined for four consecutive months.

Japan's exports of cars and auto parts, the country's most important export industry, have been sharply affected as the spread of the coronavirus has greatly reduced demand, leading to sharp drops in Japan's exports since March. Exports fell 28.3 percent in May from a year earlier, the biggest drop since September 2009. So far, Japan's exports have fallen for 18 months in a row.

The Bank of Japan (BOJ)'s short-term economic survey for the second quarter of this year released on Wednesday showed a continued sharp deterioration in business sentiment after the previous quarter. The index of sentiment among large manufacturers fell to minus 34 from minus eight in the previous quarter, the lowest since the second quarter of 2009.



A BOJ survey also showed a pick-up in sentiment among Japan's biggest companies as they look ahead to the third quarter. The development of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' SpaceJet commercial airliner. (Photo courtesy of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries). **PHOTO: KYODO**

The number of bankrupt companies in Japan has increased rapidly, and the trend of not hiring non-regular employees in various industries has intensified while the employment environment has deteriorated. Surveys have showed bankruptcies rose 15 percent in April from a year earlier, the eighth straight month of increase. Japan's unemployment rate increased for the third month in a row in May.

As the economy continues to slide, Japan's core consumer price index has fallen for two consecutive months since April, accumulating deflationary pressure.

Haruhiko Kuroda, governor of the BOJ, said the economy is expected to shrink considerably in the second quarter. The International Monetary Fund's latest World Economic Outlook also forecast that Japan's economy will shrink by 5.8 percent this year.

However, the pace of deterioration slowed as the full lifting of Japan's state of emergency on May 25 and the government's massive stimulus package began to take effect.

The number of bankruptcies in Japan fell sharply in May, according to the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Japan's economy may have bottomed out between late April and early May after a sharp downturn, the Daiwa Institute of Economic Research said in a report.

A BOJ survey also showed a pick-up in sentiment among Japan's biggest companies as they look ahead to the third quarter. BOJ officials said they believed Japan's "economy has bottomed out and will start to recover."

Japan's manufacturing production forecast index, released by the METI on Tuesday, is expected to have risen 5.7 percent month-on-month in June, compared to a forecast of 9.2-percent increase in July. As for the future direction of Japan's economy, Takeshi Minami, a researcher at Norinchukin Research Institute, said he believes that the global economic recovery is very slow and it may take quite a long time for Japan's economy to return to the pre-epidemic level. It is expected that the economic situation in the second half of the fiscal year of April 2020 to March 2021 in Japan will remain severe, he said. A report by the Daiwa Institute of Research also said that although the Japanese economy will recover briefly with the end of the state of emergency and the impact of economic stimulus policies, the sluggish consumption will continue and the economy is likely to enter a very slow recovery phase.

SOURCE: Xinhua

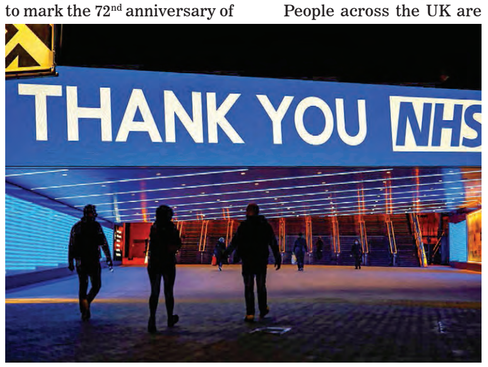
"Thank U NHS"

London landmarks go blue for the 72nd anniversary of the NHS

10 Downing Street and the London Eye are among several landmarks around the UK that are bathed in blue light to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the National Health Service. This year's celebration is particularly poignant given the challenging conditions NHS staff have had to work under over the past four months amid the coronavirus outbreak.

A NATIONWIDE round of applause is set to take place on Sunday evening to mark the 72nd anniversary of the NHS after what has been the most challenging year in the health service's history.

People across the UK are being urged to clap at 5pm to commemorate the efforts of all key workers and volunteers during the pandemic.



An illuminated sign thanking the NHS is pictured from Olympic Way, the road to Wembley Stadium in London on 26 March. **PHOTO: AFP**

The initiative follows the success of the weekly Clap for Carers, and it is hoped the applause will become an annual tradition.

A Spitfire with the message "Thank U NHS" painted on its underside will also fly over several NHS hospitals in the east of the country, finishing over Cambridge.

Also on Sunday, Prime Minister Boris Johnson will meet NHS workers in the Number 10 garden.

On Saturday night, public buildings including the Royal Albert Hall, Blackpool Tower and the Shard were lit up blue in tribute to the health service and people were encouraged to hold a minute's silence in memory of those who have died.

More than 100,000 hospital inpatients have been treated for Covid-19 in the UK, including Prime Minister Boris Johnson, along with many more who suffered with the virus at home.

Members of the armed forces constructed eight NHS Nightingale hospitals within weeks, which are all now being held on standby.

The government's latest figures showed that 44,198 people have died after testing positive for coronavirus in the UK as of 5pm on Friday.

NHS chief executive Sir Simon Stevens said hospital workers have only been able to pull the country through the pandemic thanks to a "national mobilisation" of all key workers, from care assistants and supermarket shelf-stackers to transport workers.

Sir Simon said the NHS's anniversary is an opportunity to thank these key workers.

He said: "I think for NHS there will be a sense of relief, having coming through this huge first spike of coronavirus patients, but also people have been working incredibly hard.

"So there's a need to take a moment to reflect and recharge the batteries while at the same time doing all the other brilliant things that the health service does.

"This is a huge national effort and the NHS is hugely grateful for all the support it has received from all of the rest of the country."

Sir Simon warned the NHS could have another "enormous job on our hands" if a second virus spike sweeps the UK at the same time as seasonal flu, and urged people to continue observing social distancing.

He said: "Going into autumn and winter, we are going to have to continue to be vigilant about the possible resurgence of coronavirus.

"Until such time as there is a vaccine, we know that it will be lurking across the world."

Source: ITV, AFP News Updates

■ ■ ■

Appointment of Ambassador agreed on

THE Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar has agreed to the proposed appointment of Mr Carlos Antonio Da Rocha Paranhos as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federative Republic of Brazil to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar.

Mr Carlos Antonio Da Rocha Paranhos was born in April 1950 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He holds Degree in Social Sciences and Law from Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in 1971. In 1973, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil and has served in various capacities at the Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, the Brazilian Embassies and Permanent Missions in France, Venezuela, Italy and Switzerland. In 2008, he served as the Brazilian Ambassador to Russia. At present, he is serving as Brazilian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark since 2015. — MNA

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 5th July, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, a low presssure area has formed over the Northwest Bay of Bengal and adjoining North Odisha Coast(India). Monsoon is moderate over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and strong elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL AFTERNOON OF THE 6thJuly, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Mandalay and Magway Regions, Southern Shan and Kayah States, fairly widespread in Nay Pyi Taw and Lower Sagaing Region and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of regionally heavyfalls in Rakhine State and isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing Region and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (35-40) m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (9-12) feet in Deltaic, off and along Rakhine Coasts and about (5-8) feet Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon –Taninthayi Coasts

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Weak to moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAYPYITAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th July, 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 6th July, 2020: One or two rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

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18 die in flood-ravaged southwest Japan as rescue operations continue

KUMAMOTO, Japan — Eighteen people have been confirmed dead, and at least 16 others were presumed dead in the flood-ravaged southwestern Japan prefecture of Kumamoto, the prefectural government said, as rescue operations continued on Sunday.

Rescuers struggled to reach hard-hit areas along the Kuma River, which broke its banks at several locations after torrential rain struck the area early Saturday, causing massive flooding.

At least 14 people were missing, and more than 2,000 households in eight municipalities remained isolated on Sunday morning after floods and mudslides cut off roads and swept away buildings. A Kyodo helicopter flew over an area where the words "rice, water, SOS" could be seen spelled out on the ground. Elsewhere, others were seen waving towels and calling for rescue and relief goods.

The Japan Meteorological Agency urged residents to remain alert as torrential rain is forecast in parts of western Japan through Tuesday.

Of the 18 confirmed fatalities, nine were in the city of Hitoyoshi, eight the town of Ashikita, and one in Tsunagi, mostly in their 60s to 80s.

Sixteen more people are feared dead in the village of Kuma, including 14 from a nursing home near the river, which runs through the central part of the village.

About 50 people were rescued from the flood-hit Senjuen nursing home Sunday, the local government said. A day earlier, the 14 people were found showing no vital signs but have yet to be officially declared as fatalities.

Ground Self-Defense Force personnel have been dispatched to the region as part of relief efforts. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has said around 10,000 SDF personnel will be mobilized.



Hitoyoshi, Kumamoto Prefecture, on July 5, 2020. **PHOTO: (KYODO)**

The premier said at a disaster management meeting Sunday that he wants rescue workers to do their utmost to help stranded people and search for the missing "through the night."—Kyodo ■

Auctioned transaction at Kunming flower market down 2.2 pct

KUNMING — A total of 3.59 million stems of flowers were transacted Sunday via the electronic auction services of the Kunming Dounan Flower Market, Asia's largest fresh cut flower trading market, down 2.2 percent from Saturday.

The data were provided by the Kunming International Flora Auction Trading Center and the Dounan Flower Electronic Trade Center.

As a barometer of China's flower market, the Kunming-based market in southwest China's Yunnan Province saw the trading volume of fresh cut flowers reach 9.23 billion stems in 2019.—Xinhua ■



A vendor sells flowers at a market in Kunming, capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province, Feb. 12, 2017. Planting area of flowers in Yunnan has reached 1.12 million mu (about 74,667 hectares). Flower products here are exported to 40 some countries and regions. **PHOTO: (XINHUA/LIN YIGUANG)**

Vietnam records no new COVID-19 cases



Motorists, wearing facemasks amid concerns of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, ride past the Formula One Vietnam Grand Prix race track site in Hanoi. **(AFP PHOTO)/FILE**

HANOI — Vietnam reported no new cases of COVID-19 infection on Sunday, with its total confirmed cases remaining at 355 with zero deaths so far, according to the Ministry of Health.

As many as 340 patients in the country have totally recovered from the disease, the ministry said. Vietnam has recorded no local transmission for 80 straight days, while there are nearly 11,500 people being quarantined and monitored in the country, according to a report by Vietnam News Agency.—Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tokyo governor Koike cruises to second term

TOKYO — okyo governor Yuriko Koike declared victory in Sunday's vote to elect the leader of one of the world's most populous cities and immediately vowed to step up the fight against a recent coronavirus resurgence.

Major media exit polls suggested a landslide victory after voting stations closed at 8 pm (1100 GMT), as Koike shrugged off challenges from a wide range of candidates, many of whom were political novices.

The 67-year-old media-savvy Koike is a rare top female leader in Japan's male-dominated politics and is often mentioned as a possible prime minister. Many observers say her smooth performance during the coronavirus pandemic contrasted sharply with current PM Shinzo Abe, who critics say bungled Japan's response.

The postponed Olympics, due to open on July 23, 2021, was also a major theme of the campaign and Koike pledged to reduce the Games budget as organisers grapple with the unprecedented challenge of rescheduling the event.– AFP ■

Two killed, 7 missing as ship capsizes in waters off central Indonesia

JAKARTA – Two people were killed and seven others went missing as a ship went down in waters off East Nusa Tenggara province in the central part of Indonesia on Sunday, a top rescuer said.

The ship named KM Kasih 25, carrying 28 people, sank in Fakuafu Strait after departing from a sea port in the province's capital of Kupang, Head of the Provincial Search and Rescue Office Emy Freezer told Xinhua by phone, citing that the ship was heading to Rote Ndao district of the province.

"We suspect huge waves to be the cause of the sea accident. But the National Transport Safety Committee will carry out an investigation," he said.

A search and rescue operation has been undertaken and three vessels as well as scores of personnel from the local search and rescue office have staged the mission, said Freezer.–Xinhua ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

UK historian quits Cambridge over slavery claim

LONDON — A British royal historian who said slavery was not genocide has quit his honorary position at Cambridge University and been dropped by his publisher HarperCollins.

The comments from Professor David Starkey came during a period of soul searching in Britain over its colonial past.

The Black Lives Matter movement that gained momentum after the death of George Floyd in US police custody in May saw the statue of a major slave trader dumped in an English harbour as protests hit cities across the UK.

Starkey is an expert on Britain's Tudor period -- a time in the 1500s when the slave trade was growing as European colonies across the Caribbean and the Americas expanded. —AFP ■

Italy says could take rescued migrants Monday

ROME — Italy is carrying out tests on 180 migrants rescued in the Mediterranean with a view to transferring them to a quarantine vessel in Sicily, an interior ministry source said Saturday.

The migrants have been on the Ocean Viking ship operated by SOS Mediterranee for over a week, with fights and suicide attempts on board prompting the charity to declare a state of emergency on Friday.

A medical team sent by authorities in Pozzallo, Sicily "ascertained the absence of particular health problems and also reported that some tensions that had been registered on the ship are being overcome," the ministry source said.

The medical team is testing the migrants for the COVID-19 virus after which they will be transferred to a quarantine ship currently in Porto Empedocle, also in Sicily.

"The situation is carefully monitored in view of the transhipment of migrants, scheduled for Monday 6 July, on the Moby Zaza ship," the source said.—AFP ■

Trump's angry words, virus darken US July 4th weekend



US President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump host the 2020 "Salute to America" on the South Lawn of the White House on July 4, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

WASHINGTON — The United States marked an unusually somber Independence Day on Saturday, with President Donald Trump bashing domestic opponents and China -- but praising the country's coronavirus response, despite a record surge in cases.

Across the country, virus fears dampened or nixed Main Street parades, backyard barbecues and family reunions on a day when Americans typically celebrate their 1776 declaration of independence from Britain.

Instead of adopting a unifying tone, Trump -- facing a tough re-election and eager to mobilize his political base -- railed against protesters demanding racial justice after unarmed African American George Floyd was killed by a white police officer.

"We are now in the process of defeating the radical left, the Marxists, the anarchists, the agitators, the looters," Trump said.

Anti-racism protesters who have marched in cities across America are "not interested in justice or healing. Their goal is demolition," he said.

Speaking from the White House lawn, Trump addressed a crowd that included frontline health workers battling COVID-19, which has killed nearly 130,000 Americans.

He accused China -- where the outbreak originated -- of a cover-up that allowed the illness to race across the globe, but hailed American "scientific brilliance."

"We'll likely have a therapeutic and or vaccine solution long before the end of the year," he said.

Some of the US leader's sharpest words were for the media, which he accused of a campaign to smear opponents as racists.

"The more you lie, the more you slander, the more you try to demean and divide, the more we will work hard to tell the truth and we will win," Trump said, with four months to go until the election.— AFP ■

Croatia votes for new government as virus woes loom



Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic is hoping the uncertainty of the health crisis will inspire voters to stick with his HDZ, in power since 2016. **PHOTO: AFP**

ZAGREB — Croatians went to the polls Sunday for a government to navigate the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, in a tight race pitting ruling conservatives against leftist rivals and a new nationalist party on the rise.

The pandemic has put Croatia's tourism-dependent economy on course for a contraction of nearly 10 percent -- its steepest decline in decades -- even as the country's own health situation has remained stable.

The ruling conservative HDZ party, which has led the Adriatic country for most of its independence, has been touting its relative success in containing the country's virus outbreak thus far, with an official tally of roughly 110 deaths and 3,000 infections.

But a fresh rise of cases in recent weeks, with dozens recorded daily, has renewed fears over the health situation and given the opposition fresh ammunition.

"Whoever wins will face major economic problems to deal with in autumn. It won't be easy," said Igor Ivic, a 49-year-old economist among the first crowd of voters to cast ballots in Zagreb.— AFP ■

Rockets target US interests despite arrests: Iraq military

BAGHDAD — Two rocket attacks targeted American diplomatic and military installations overnight, Iraq's security forces said Sunday, a little over a week since unprecedented arrests prevented a similar incident.

Since October, US diplomats and troops across Iraq have been targeted by around three dozen missile attacks which Washington has blamed on pro-Iranian armed factions.

In the first move of its kind, elite Iraqi troops in late June arrested more than a dozen Tehran-backed fighters who were allegedly planning a new attack on Baghdad's Green Zone, home to the US and other foreign embassies.

Iraqi government officials said the raid would serve as a "message" to deter future attacks, but early on Sunday, militants made another attempt.

One rocket fired at the Green Zone landed near a home, wounding a child, according to the Iraqi military.

"At the same time, our forces were able to thwart another attack and seize a Katyusha rocket and launcher that were targeting the Taji base north of Baghdad," where US-led coalition troops are based, it added.

The attempts came just hours after the US embassy tested a new rocket defence system known as a C-RAM, according to a senior Iraqi security source.— AFP ■

‘Smoke that thunders’: first ‘made-in-Zimbabwe’ luxury cigars

HARARE — A Zimbabwean entrepreneur in Africa’s top tobacco producer has launched the first local brand of hand-rolled cigars, defying coronavirus and economic odds to light up manufacturing.

The southern African nation produced more than 252 million kilogrammes of tobacco last year, making it the sixth largest producer in the world.

Nearly all of it is the “golden-leaf” Virginia used for cigarettes and most of that is exported to China, Germany and other international markets.

Upon returning last year to his homeland after 15 years working in the United States, Shep Mafundikwa was determined to start a business that would “benefit” Zimbabwe.

“Though I am not a smoker, I noticed a preponderance of cigar lounges across the United States and decided I’d try to corner some of that market,” said Mafundikwa, 54, who worked for an American airline.

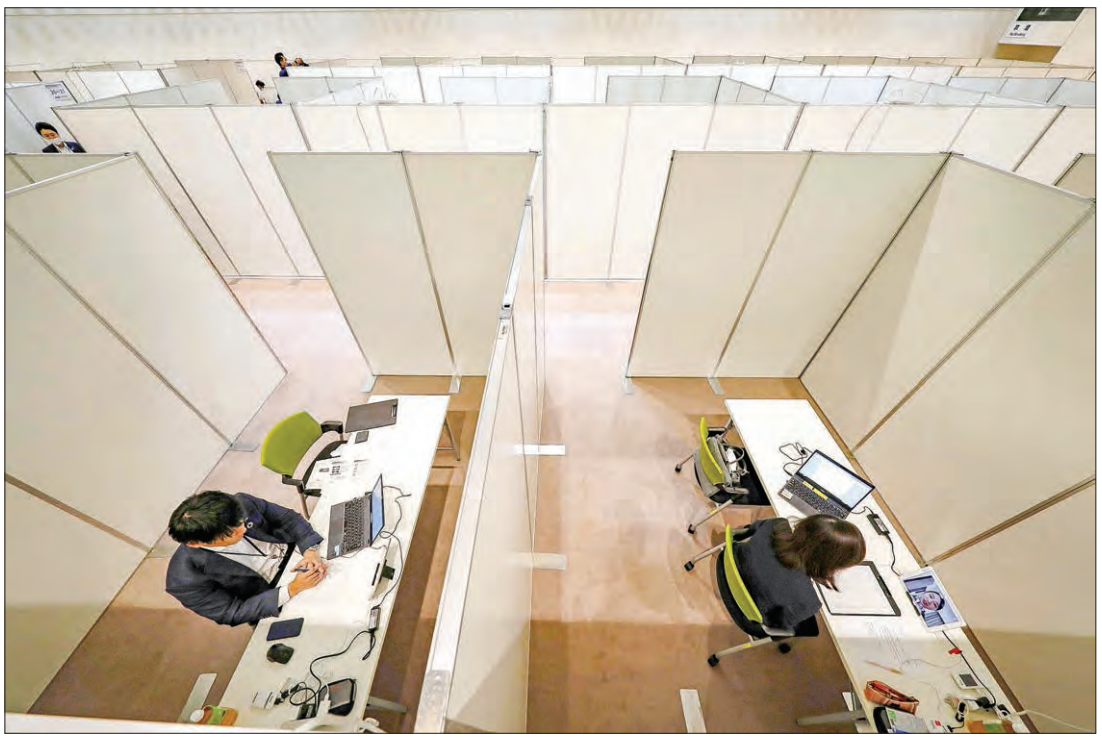
He started with trips to Cuba and the Dominican Republic, both premium cigar producers, where he recruited Dominican cigar-rolling maestro Elias Lopez.

The pair selected air-cured Burley tobacco, a darker variety that accounts for a small percentage of local production.

In May, Mafundikwa launched Mosi Oa Tunya Cigars — the local Lozi name for the Victoria Falls, which translates to “the smoke that thunders”. —AFP ■



Zimbabwe is the world’s sixth largest tobacco producer with more than 252 million kilos last year. **PHOTO : AFP/FILE**



Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Co. interviewers hold online meetings with students in Tokyo on June 1, 2020, the government-set start day for companies to hold interviews with job-hunting college seniors. Many companies have switched from face-to-face meetings to online interviews amid continuing worries about the new coronavirus. **PHOTO : KYODO**

Move to online recruitment sees students spend less on job hunting

TOKYO — Students in Japan spent an average of about 29,000 yen ($270) on job-hunting activities between March and May, about a third of last year’s amount, as the move to online recruitment amid the coronavirus pandemic cut their related transport and accommodation expenses, a survey showed.

Conducted by recruitment services provider Mynavi Corp., the poll revealed 94.7 percent of job interviews in May were conducted online as companies switched to the virtual world during Japan’s state of emergency and the government’s stay-at-home requests.

A total of 2,202 undergraduate and postgraduate students due to graduate in 2021 responded to the Mynavi online survey, carried out from May 25-31.

They spent an average of 28,930 yen on job hunting during the three months, against 89,415 yen last year, as their outlay on related travel and accommodation tumbled more than 50,000 yen.

During the nationwide state of emergency in April and May, people were advised to refrain from going out, and nonessential businesses to temporarily close.

“Both students and recruiters know the advantages of online interviews, so they will continue to be adopted to some extent,” a Mynavi official said.—Kyodo ■

Weekly CBOT agricultural futures rally on bullish crop report

CHICAGO — CBOT agricultural futures rose for the week ending July 3 on a bullish U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) crop report, and higher energy markets. CBOT corn futures rallied sharply following the National Agricultural Statistics Service’s unexpected 5-million-acre cut to 2020 U.S. corn planted area in its crop report. This will reduce total new corn crop supply and place a bit pressure on U.S. Midwest weather over the next 20-25 days.

The intensity of the rally was driven in part by funds’ massive net short established prior to the report’s release, Chicago-based consulting company AgResource noted. The company suggests a longer-term bearish trend will stay intact on sliding demand due to oversized competition for export demand and negative U.S. ethanol margins.—Xinhua ■

China’s green bond issuance increases in 2019: report

BEIJING — China’s green bond issuance saw steady growth in 2019, with more diversified issuers in the market, a recent report showed.

The issuance of the country’s green bonds rose 33 percent to 386.2 billion yuan (about 54.7 billion U.S. dollars) in 2019, according to an annual report on China’s green bond market jointly released by the China Central Depository & Clearing Co., Ltd. and the Climate Bonds Initiative.

Non-financial institutions overtook financial institutions as the biggest issuers, with their issuance surging 54 percent and accounting for 37 percent of last year’s total, the report said.

China announced a plan in 2016 to establish a national green finance mechanism, becoming the first country worldwide to make such a move. It also helped push green finance to be included on the G20 agenda.—Xinhua ■

Big Oil confronts possibility of terminal demand decline

PARIS — Although crude prices have rebounded from coronavirus crisis lows, oil execs and experts are starting to ask if the industry has crossed the Rubicon of peak demand.

The plunge in the price of crude oil during the first wave of coronavirus lockdowns — futures prices briefly turned negative — was due to the drop in global demand as planes were parked on tarmacs and cars in garages.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) forecast that average daily oil demand will drop by eight million barrels per day this year, a decline of around eight percent from last year.

While the agency expects an unprecedented rebound of 5.7 million barrels per day next year, it still forecasts overall demand will be lower than in 2019 owing to ongoing uncertainty in the airline sector.

Some are questioning whether demand will ever get back to 2019 levels. “I don’t think we know how this is going to play out. I certainly don’t know,” BP’s new chief executive Bernard Looney said in May.

The COVID-19 pandemic was in full swing then with most planes grounded and white-collar workers giving up the commute to work from home.

“Could it be peak oil? Possibly. I would not write that off,” Looney told the Financial Times.—AFP ■

TEPCO launches huge vertical farm reliant on artificial light

TOKYO — A unit of Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. launched last week an indoor vertical farm in central Japan with production capacity of 5 tons a day -- one of the world's largest for facilities relying solely on artificial lighting.

TEPCO Energy Partner Inc. started the operation of the farm with a total floor space of about 9,000 square meters last Wednesday in the city of Fujieda, Shizuoka Prefecture, to grow leafy greens such as lettuce by utilizing light-emitting diodes.

The company aims to initially produce about 1 ton of vegetables per day and will begin shipping around August.

The firm said it plans to raise the output to 5 tons a day by next year and move into the black in 2023.

Vertical farming relying only on artificial lighting has been drawing attention as a way to ensure stability in production and distribution of food items, as it is not affected by undesirable weather conditions and other risks such as epidemics, the TEPCO unit said.

Such facilities are also expected to provide solutions for some of the problems faced by Japanese agriculture industry, such as a decline in the number of farmers and the aging of those still working the land, it added.—Kyodo ■



Supplied photo shows an indoor vertical farm launched by TEPCO Energy Partner Inc. in Fujieda, Shizuoka Prefecture. **PHOTO: KYODO**

Europe-bound freight trains from China's Yiwu increase by 151 pct in H1

HANGZHOU — The number of Europe-bound freight trains departing from the city of Yiwu in east China reached 296 in the first half of this year, up 151.1 percent year on year, railway sources said Sunday.

A train loaded with 100 TEUs of cargo departed from Yiwu, the country's small-commodity hub, bound for Madrid, Spain, on Friday afternoon. It was the 300th China-Europe freight train to leave the city since Jan. 1.

By Friday, a total of nearly 25,000 TEUs of commodities had been transported by freight trains from Yiwu to Europe.



A China-Europe freight train carrying anti-novel coronavirus supplies departs for Madrid of Spain from the Yiwu West Train Station in Yiwu, east China's Zhejiang Province, March 21, 2020. **(PHOTO BY GONG XIANMING/XINHUA)**

Since May 5, the city has seen the departure of 20 or more China-Europe trains on a weekly basis.

Railway authorities say the city aims to launch 1,000 freight trains to Europe in 2020.—Xinhua ■

Israel companies ink deal with UAE firm in virus fight

JERUSALEM — Two leading Israeli defence companies said on Friday they had signed deals with an Emirati tech firm to battle the novel coronavirus, including by developing fast, "non-invasive" testing.

Israel's state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and Rafael Advanced Defense Systems said in separate statements that they had signed agreements with Abu Dhabi-based Group 42.

Israel has no formal ties with Arab countries apart from neighbouring Jordan and Egypt.

But Middle Eastern states including the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have nurtured informal ties with Israel in recent years, partly spurred by shared hostility towards Iran.

Israel Lupa, Executive Vice President and Head of Technology at IAI's ELTA Group, told AFP the firm's collaboration with Group 42 was focussed on developing a "non-invasive testing system" capable of detecting the novel coronavirus "within minutes".

"We will bring the technology and they (Group 42) will bring medical knowledge," he said.

Yoav Turgeman, IAI's Vice President and CEO of ELTA, said in the statement that IAI was "excited to sign the collaboration agreement with our Abu Dhabi partners".

"COVID-19 does not distinguish between continents, peoples, and religions," he added.

A spokesperson for Rafael confirmed the agreement without providing further details.

A statement on the Group 42 website dated on Thursday said the company had signed "two distinct memorandums of understanding" with Rafael and IAI.

Group 42 was "privileged to follow the lead and share resources and expertise with Rafael and IAI for such a significant cause", CEO Peng Xiao said in a statement carried by UAE news agency WAM.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1139W)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V XETHA BHUM VOY. NO. (1139W)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S REGIONAL CONTAINER LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (663N/S)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V SINAR BANDUNG VOY. NO. (663N/S)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **6-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **MITT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S SAMUDERA SHIPPING LINES

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0209-650N)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V UNI ACCORD VOY. NO. (0209-650N)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **5-7-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **AWPT** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

Damaged cargo will be surveyed daily from 8 am to 11:20 am and 12 noon to 4 pm to Claim's Day now declared as the third day after final discharge of cargo from the Vessel.

No claims against this vessel will be admitted after the Claims Day.

Phone No: **2301185**

Shipping Agency Department
Myanma Port Authority

Agent For:

M/S EVERGREEN MARINE (S'PORE) PTE., LTD.

Ywangan that I've been to

By Ye Yint Aung (Geology)



Pyadalin Cave Yawngan Township, Taunggyi, Shan State. **PHOTO: YE YINT AU**

I WENT on a field survey with geology students in 2017 to Ywangan Region in Danu Self Administered Zone. Ywangan town is at an elevation of 4,028 ft. above sea level. It was formed with 28 village tracts and had a population of more than 82,000. It was in Shan State south and can be reached from Aungban-Pindaya road junction. As Ywangan town was surrounded by unspoilt natural beauties it was considered as a virgin land. It is a land where peace and tranquillity prevails.

To Ywangan we go

Hinthada geology field survey group led by Dr. Kyaw Lin Zaw went to Ywangan Region by rail from Yangon Station. We entered Shan State south passing through Thazi and Yinmabin. As we entered Shan State the temperature became cooler. The rail track twist and turns after passing Kalaw and after about half an hour, we reached our disembarkation station in Aungban. Aungban Station to Ywangan was a 42 miles car ride that took us through natural scenes of mountains and hills as well as some pagodas. Euclid trees were all along the road side occasionally dotted by some farm lands. We passed through several big villages such as Myin Twin, Myinjado and Phayagyigon and reaches Ywangan after a car ride of about an hour.

Alechaung Village – our base camp

The geology field survey group set up a base camp at Alechaung Village. It is situated on the west of the Pindaya mountain range. The majority of the villagers were Danu and they were a very friendly and simple people. Of the 135 ethnic nationals in Myanmar, the Danus are the tenth most populous and were one of the ethnic nationals that had lived in Myanmar for the longest time. Danu National Day was held annually on the 8th Waxing Day of Nattaw. Bama, Pa-O and Palaung in addition to Danu lived in the region. Mountains and hills lies on the east of the village while farmlands and plains are on the west of the village. Every five days, there is a market and access to food was very convenient and easy.

The village had two monasteries, named simply North Monastery and South Monastery. Geology field survey group from Pathein had setup their base camp in the North Monastery so our Hinthada Group setup our base camp in the South Monastery. In addition to having access to electricity and water, the South Monastery has a football field that became football practicing ground for our survey students.

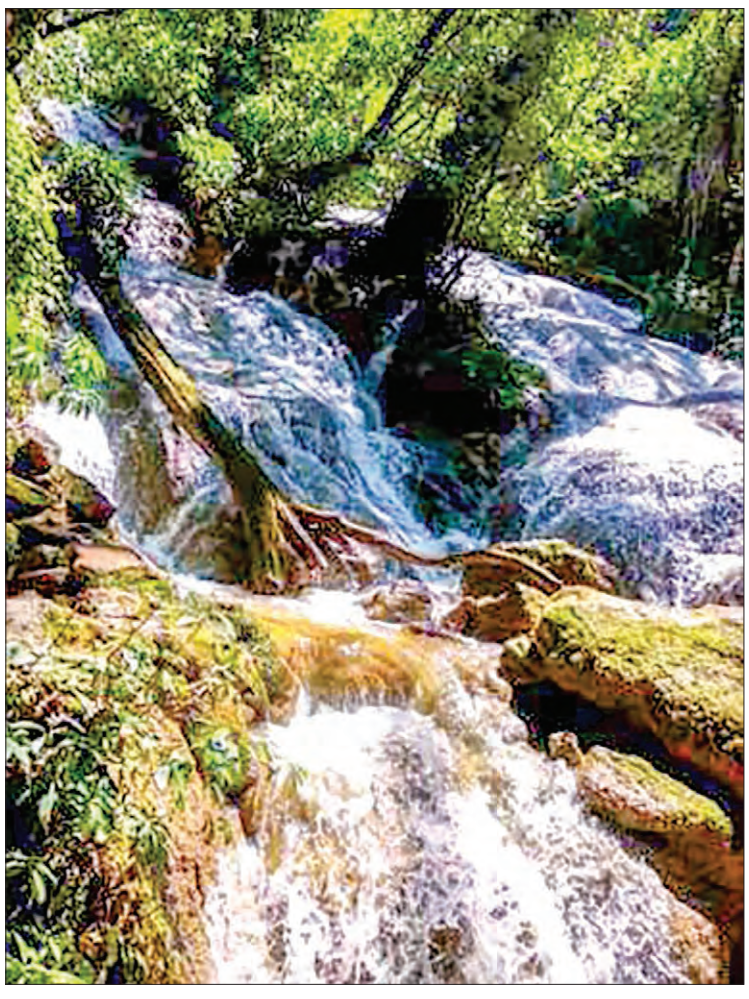
The village is a liquor free area where sale and consumption was not made. Villagers were devote Buddhists and the time was when a donation ceremony was being held for young boys becoming novice monks. We were invited to enjoy the food donation made for the occasion which runs for a whole week and villagers from nearby villages were also invited.

Agriculture products of the region

Agriculture was the main mean of livelihood in Ywangan region. Fruits and vegetables such as orange, tomato, cabbage, ginger, avocado etc. were grown but the main products were coffee and tea. Coffee and tea plantations are the usual sight seen at entrance of every village. Ywangan coffee has become known in the world for its quality and was reported to have achieved a Geographical Indication (GI), the same designation that protects the Champagne region in France from copycats. Ywangan coffee beans are of the Costa Rican variety and are grown as a substitute for poppy. The coffee is currently rated at a level of 85 in the global market under the recommendations from American Coffee Specialists. Any grade of 80 or above is considered a specialty coffee. Out of 125 villages in Ywangan Township, about 90 are engaged in coffee plantation with 7,300 acres of coffee farms.

Field survey starts

The field survey starts by studying geological layouts of the area near Alechaung Village. One day, the field survey team conducted a survey of rock formations on Yasakyi Mountain that was on the east of the village. It was the highest mountain in the area where the survey was conducted rising to a height of 6,860 ft. The mountain rises above us imposingly as we reached the foot of the mountain where we took a brief rest before hiking up. We left the village in the morning and we reached the summit of the mountain only at noon. Although the hike up the mountain was tedious and time consuming, the sight waiting at the summit was breathtaking. All the mountains in the area were below us except for some higher peaks of Shan State that were visible afar. Every hiking enthusiast should hike up Yasakyi Mountain near Alechaung Village in Ywangan



Ahlelchaung waterfall. **PHOTO: YE YINT AUNG**



Scenery of Ywangan. **PHOTO: YE YINT AUNG**



Workers dry coffee berries under the sun shine in Ywangan. **PHOTO: MNA**



UNG



Main Ma Ye Thakhinma mountain. **PHOTO: YE YINT AUNG**

Township to enjoy the view from the summit as well as the hike up and down the mountain.

Well known areas in the vicinity

There were many well known areas in the region. To the south of Ywangan Town lies Meinmaye Thakhinma Mountain. There are stairways to the pagoda on top that will take about 15 minutes to climb up.

Myathabeik Blue Water Pond and Tawkye waterfall is near Tawkye Village. Blue Water Pond was teeming with small shops selling local products such as herbs, local food, honey, flowers and gift items. There was no scientific explanation made yet for the water in the pond being blue but locals believe that it was the reflection of an emerald bowl (Myathabeik in Myanmar language) at the bottom of the pond. Local superstition was such that littering, washing with the water in the pond, taking water from the pond was not done while care was taken of not speaking any word that can be deemed as offensive or rude.

20-minute walk from Blue Water Pond will take you to Tawkye waterfall. The water in the pond at the bottom of the waterfall was so clear that fish can be seen swimming in it.

There was even a waterfall right near Alechaung Village. It was a fall that goes down 11 steps or levels. During the time when the waterfall was at its highest flow of water volume, there were considerable numbers of visitors visiting it.

Pyadalin Cave in Ywangan Township is another famous cave. There are in fact two caves the smaller one amount to being a rock shelter while the larger one had nine chambers connected by narrow passages. Three large sink holes bring in natural light into the cave. This cave contains an impressive amount of history reportedly dating back to the Neolithic era. The two caves were only 30 meters apart from one another and some of the earliest wall carvings and paintings in Myanmar were found here along with weapons made of bones and stones by primitive people. According to Wikipedia a superficial investigation of the caves had been performed by American South-East Expedition for Early Man in 1937-1938 and geologist U Khin Maung Kyaw discovered the paintings in 1960. The site was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List on 4 October 1996 in the Cultural category.

Another unique place is the Yephyu Waterhole near Tatkon Village, Kyantaw Village Tract. It is located southwest of Alechaung Village. The water from this waterhole was not clear but white in color, hence the name Yephyu which mean white water. Locals say bathing with the water from this waterhole eases aches and itches. The place is indeed a virgin area.

The highest peak in Shan State, 7,752 ft. high Ashay Myin Anauk Myin Mountain is also in Ywangan. Taunggyi town can be seen looking toward the east from the summit. Looking west, Meiktila town can be seen too. South of the mountain lies 7,307 ft. high Moelonehein Mountain and to the north lies 7,203 ft. high Pansitpway Mountain. The Ashay Myin Anauk Myin Mountain is home to rare flowers as well as birds and animal species. The summit of the mountain can be reached either from Ywangan side or Pindaya side. The mountain was located about 6 miles southwest of Alechaung Village.

Another significant place is a small pillar marking the place where ash of Colonel Ba Htoo was buried. Major Ba Htoo at that time led the fight against the Japanese in upper Myanmar in 1945. The plan was for the Myanmar army under General Aung San to revolt against the Japanese in end March but Major Ba Htoo declared unilateral war against the Japanese on early March diverting attention from General Aung San who led the entire Myanmar army uprising at a later date. Major Ba Htoo's action contributed toward driving the Japanese fascist forces out of the country but he succumbed to a severe case of malaria. The plaque on the pillar simply stated "Martyr hero Colonel Ba Htoo passed away on 8:10 p.m. 2 June 1945 in Ywangan Township Telu Village. His ashes were buried here." It was reported that when Major Ba Htoo passed away, he never knew of his promotion to colonel by General Aung San. A monument honouring Colonel Ba Htoo was put up in Aungban but the small pillar in front of Telu Village Basic Education Primary School was the spot where his ashes were buried. Even though it was a considerable walk through humid valley and over a rickety bamboo bridge across a river, we took the long walk to honor and salute our martyr hero.

I was there as part of a geological field survey but I would have gladly made the trip as a tourist to enjoy again all that I've seen and been to in Ywangan region.

(Translated by Handytips)



Natural clear blue water lagoon (Mya-tha-bait-yay-pyar-aing). **PHOTO: YE YINT AUNG**



Aung La Nsang. **PHOTO: AUNG LA NSANG FACEBOOK**

Aung La Nsang: I'm very blessed COVID-19 wasn't too hard on me

Myanmar's mixed martial arts star Aung La Nsang, also known as Burmese Python, said he was feeling much better as coronavirus was not too hard on him, according to his social media.

Myanmar's famous mixed martial arts star posted on his Facebook yesterday, "Feeling much better today. I'm very blessed Covid-19 wasn't too hard on me. Now I'm going to stay home so I don't spread it because it affects people differently".

He announced that he has tested for COVID-19 in the United States on 3 July.

"My family and I will be quarantining ourselves for the next 14 days. I had a slight fever, congestion, body ache and fatigue on the first two days. Besides that, I am blessed that my whole family is doing well. We are really in this together and we will get over this," said Aung La Nsang.

The 35-year-old Burmese-born American mixed martial artist of ethnic Kachin descent currently signed to ONE Championship, competing in both the Middleweight and Light heavyweight divisions.

He is the current ONE Middleweight World Champion and ONE Light Heavyweight World Champion.

One Championship recently announced it would return behind closed doors in Thailand end of this month after a five-month break because of the coronavirus. —Kyaw Khin ■

Bayern fighting to keep Alaba, Liverpool-linked Thiago

BERLIN — Bayern Munich coach Hansi Flick says he is determined to keep defender David Alaba and midfielder Thiago Alcantara, who has been linked to a move to Liverpool.

"I will do everything I can to ensure that we can keep two such quality players," said Flick after the Bundesliga champions completed the double with a 4-2 win over Bayer Leverkusen in the German Cup final on Saturday.

"I'm trying to keep the squad together as it is at the moment."

Both Alaba, who scored the opening goal in Berlin, and Alcantara, a second-half replacement in the cup final, only have a year left on their contracts.

Alcantara, 29, is of particular concern as the Spanish media has linked him to a move to Liverpool, but Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge says no offer has yet been received.

"We have negotiated with him seriously and granted all his wishes, but it looks like he wants to do something new at the end of his career," Rummenigge told daily Bild. However, Flick hopes to persuade Alcantara, who joined Bayern in 2013: "I'll do my best to make sure he stays.

"You could seen that he identifies 100 per cent with the club," Flick added after the Spaniard enthusiastically took part in the cup final celebrations. —AFP ■



Thiago Alcantara touches the German Cup trophy after Bayern Munich's 4-2 triump over Bayer Levekursen in Saturday's German Cup final. **PHOTO: AFP**

Zidane hopes for Hazard return this season after latest injury set-back

MADRID — Zinedine Zidane hopes Eden Hazard will play again this season but has confirmed the Belgian is feeling pain again in his troublesome right ankle.

Hazard will miss Real Madrid's game away at Athletic Bilbao in La Liga on Sunday (Jul 5), when Zidane's team could extend their four-point lead over Barcelona, who face in-form Villarreal.

After undergoing surgery on his right ankle in March, Hazard was able to use the three-month suspension to recover.

Yet he was forced off early against Espanyol last weekend after taking a knock to the same ankle and then sat out Madrid's win over Getafe on Thursday.



Eden Hazard has endured an injury-plagued first year at Real Madrid. **PHOTO: AFP**

"I hope so," Zidane said, when asked if Hazard will play again this season. "Eden has been having trouble these last few days. We don't want to risk anything.

"Hopefully it's minor, we hope we can see Eden with us before the end of the season. It's day-by-day, we know it was just a big hit, nothing more."

Hazard has endured an injury-plagued first season since joining Real Madrid from Chelsea for 100 million euros last year. Asked if Hazard was becoming afraid of getting injured, Zidane said: "I don't think so, what you want is to be fine and to play. When he feels discomfort and isn't 100 percent, it's a problem for him and for everyone.—AFP ■

Lampard tells Chelsea to embrace Champions League pressure

LONDON — Frank Lampard told Chelsea to embrace the pressure of the race for a place in the Champions League next season after his side edged two points back in front of Manchester United and into the top four with a comfortable 3-0 win over Watford on Saturday.

After a bitterly disappointing 3-2 defeat at struggling West Ham in midweek, in-form United's 5-2 thrashing of Bournemouth earlier in the day saw Chelsea slip outside the top four before kick-off.

But there was never any doubt the Blues would move back into fourth as goals from Olivier Giroud, Willian and Ross Barkley capped a dominant display and left the Hornets still precariously placed just one point outside the relegation zone.

"We had the chance to go third on Wednesday. Today there was pressure on us just to get back into fourth. That's the pressure we have to get used to," said Lampard. "It was a comfortable evening for us."

The pressure is certainly on Lampard to deliver Champions League football next season after the club have already invested nearly £100 million ($125 million) in signing Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech.

Lampard reacted to conceding three times to West Ham by making four changes with Marcos Alonso and Antonio Rudiger paying the price for their part in the Hammers' late winner.—AFP ■