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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 107, 13th Waxing of Second Waso 1382 ME www.globalnewlightofmyanmar.com Saturday, 1 August 2020

Myanmar brings 186 nationals back home by relief flights



Myanmar nationals returned from foreign countries queue for immigration services at the Yangon International Airport on 31 July 2020.
PHOTO : MNA

A RELIEF flight of Myanmar Airways International brought back 121 Myanmar nationals stranded in Jordan with the help of Myanmar embassy in Tel Aviv, and it landed at Yangon International Airport yesterday morning.

Another relief flight of MAI arrived in Yangon, carrying 65Myanmar citizens from Cambodia on the same day.

As they arrived in Yangon, officials from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population, the Ministry of Health and Sports, and the Yangon Region government helped for their 21-day quarantine period in line with the regulations of immigration and medical checks.

To bring back the Myanmar citizens who are stranded in foreign countries by relief flights and chartered flights in accordance with the instructions from National-Level Central Committee on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cooperates with the relevant ministries and Myanmar embassies from respective countries and brought back a total of 9,825 citizens to date.

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)

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No new case of COVID-19 reported in Myanmar on 31 July, total figure remains at 353

Updated at 8 pm, 31 July 2020

Total Cases	New Case	Total Death Tally
353	0	6

Recovery Update on 31 July 2020 after two consecutive tests

Total Recovery	New Recovery	Discharged from Hospital
296	1	281

New Persons under Investigation from the past 24 hours to 12 noon of 31 July 2020

New PUIs
15

Ministry of Health and Sports



Union Commerce Minister encourages mobile vegetable sales in Yangon

THE Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association sold vegetables on its mobile truck at Sanpya Nga Moe Yeik market in Thingangyun Township, Yangon, yesterday.

Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint, Hluttaw representatives and departmental officials viewed the retail trade and gave necessary advice to the sales organizers.

The Union Minister and party inspected the national emergency reserved rice storage facility at Industry Zone 4 of Shwepyitha Township in Yangon Region. — MNA ■

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

Union Minister Dr Than Myint and officials view the fruits displayed on a truck at the Sanpya Nga Moe Yeik Market in Yangon on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Govt provides relief assistance to central Myanmar flood victims

OFFICIALS of Disaster Management are providing food supplies, cash assistance and medical equipment for prevention of COVID-19 flood victims in Mandalay, Sagaing and Magway regions under the supervision of National Disaster Management Committee.

Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye comforted and provided the flood victims in NyaungU of Mandalay Region and Yesago of Magway Region yesterday morning.

Cash assistance, instant noodle, masks and soap bars for COVID-19 were also given to 354 flood victims who are taking shelter at Mahawithuta-yama Monastery, Shit-Myat-Hnar Monastery in Sone Kone quarter and Mya Thein Tan religious hall.

The Union Minister also presented K632,100, instant noodle, masks and soap bars to 301 flood victims in Phu Lone village of Yesago township in Magway Region.

During the meetings with the flood victims, the Union Minister comforted them and raised awareness on climate changes that caused drought and floods.

He explained the government's efforts on disaster management and called for public participation in this regard. —MNA ■

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye meets flood victims on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

18 Myanmar nationals enter Chinshwehaw border town in returning home

LOCAL authorities in Chinshwehaw border town of northern Shan State received 18 Myanmar returnees from China on 30 and 31 July.

Among 10 males and 8 females, 3 persons were from Sagaing Region and 15 were from northern Shan State.

They will go back to respective areas through Lashio.

A total of 13,941 persons have returned Myanmar from China through Chinshwehaw border from 30 April to now. ■

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



A man who returned from China (R) has temperature checked at the Chinshwehaw border on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

343 Myanmar migrant workers return home via Myawady border

A total of 343 Myanmar migrant workers – 207 males and 136 females – came back home from Thailand through the Myawady Friendship Bridge (2) yesterday.

Kayin State Hluttaw representative U Thant Zin Aung, Myawady District Administrator U Tay Zar Aung, Deputy District Administrator U Aung Chan Nyein, and officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 55,615 returnees including 11,680 in May, 25,338 in June and 18,597 in July so far have come back home through the border since 1 May.— Htein Lin Aung (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)



Officials are seen checking returnees at Myawady border's security control on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION

The General Election will be held on 8 November 2020.

- Union Election Commission has announced the first edition of eligible voter lists at local offices of the commission in respective wards/village-tracts, in the villages from 25 July 2020 to 7 November 2020.
- If the name of any eligible voter is not included in the list, voter registration can be requested by filling in Form 3.
- Objection can be filed against any ineligible voter in the list by using Form 4.
- Correction for voter list can be requested by using Form 4 (c)
- Voters can cast their votes only if their names are included in the voters list.
- Cooperation is requested for at least one member of each family to check their names without fail to ensure a complete and correct voters list.
- Check the voters lists not to lose voting rights by filling up discrepancies, deleting and making corrections.

2020
General Election
Sunday, 8 November 2020
DAYS
100

Myanmar Investment Commission approves investment proposals including development of Hlegu Industrial Park project

THE Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC) held a regular meeting yesterday morning. The meeting was chaired by Union Minister U Thaung Tun, Chairman of the MIC, Union Minister Dr Than Myint, Vice-Chairman of the MIC and members of the Commission attended the meeting.

The meeting approved 7 new projects in the industry, real estate, hotels and tourism, and manufacturing sectors as well as additional investments in 7 existing projects. The approved projects amounted to USD (462.693) million and Kyat (73,206.5) million.The projects are expected to provide (3,662) job opportunities.

Among the new projects approved by the meeting are Hlegu Industrial Park project worth USD (230.60) million with mainly investment from Sembcorp CSSD Myanmar Co., Ltd. and the AEON large scale shopping mall project worth USD (180) million from Japan and expected to create over 2,300 jobs.

Notwithstanding COVID-19, both local and foreign investments continue to show interest in Myanmar.

Singapore, People's Republic of China and Thailand head the list of countries that have invested in Myanmar in the current financial year. Investment in the power sector accounted for (26.52%). This was followed by the oil & gas sector (26.44%) and manufacturing sector(14.28%) of the total permitted amount of foreign investment.—MNA ■



Union Minister U Thaung Tun presides over the Myanmar Investment Commission (MIC)'s regular meeting in Nay Pyi Taw on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**



Union Minister Dr Pe Myint inspects printing facilities in Yangon

UNION MINISTER for Information Dr Pe Myint and officials inspected the facilities of Printing and Publishing Department (PPD) of the ministry yesterday.

Union Minister Dr Pe Myint is inspecting the PPD's three-storey building on Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Kyauktada Township, Yangon on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

They arrived at the three-storey building of the PPD on Bo Aung Kyaw Road in Kyauktada Township, former Guardian Newspaper on Merchant Road in Botahtaung Township and the Central Printing House and Bookbinding building on Padonmar street in Dagon Township.

The Union Minister gave necessary instructions on systematic maintenance and renovation to the buildings for effective use. —MNA ■

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)

To shape the future with your vote, let's check the voters list.

"People are the key"

Union Construction Minister opens bridges in Ottwin, Shwekyin



Union Minister U Han Zaw (C), Bago Region Chief Minister U Win Thein (R) and Hluttaw Speaker U Khin Maung Yin (L) unveil the Shwekyin Creek-Crossing Bridge Plaque on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

UNION Minister for Construction U Han Zaw officially opened Sittoung River-Crossing Bridge (Myo Soe) in Ottwin Township and Shwekyin Creek-Crossing Bridge in Shwekyin Township, Bago Region yesterday.

At the opening ceremony of the Sittoung River-Crossing Bridge, the Union Minister said the ministry has set objectives to equally develop roads, bridges and urban areas in regions and states fulfilling the ministry's primary duty of infrastructure development.

The ministry is constructing new roads and bridges and upgrading and maintaining old roads and bridges for the country's socio-economic development, he added.

Special Bridge Team 10 of Bridge Department constructed the 1,200-foot-long two-lane reinforced concrete bridge, which is located on Kywepwe-Myo-Soe-Zayetgyi Road.

The bridge's upper sections are made up of steel plate girders that were manufactured by J&M Steel Solutions, a company joint-ventured by the Ministry of Construction and Japanese Company JFE.

This is 44th bridge opened in Bago Region during the incumbent government, he added.

Bago Region Chief Minster U Win Thein explained the development progress of roads and bridges in Bago Region, and a resident expressed thanks for the bridge.

The bridge that connects the towns and villages on old Yangon-Mandalay Highway with eastern side of Sittoung River will bring benefits of economy, social, health and education to local people. The bridge will also connect Bagon Region with Kayin and Mon states.

In the afternoon, the Union Minister opened Shwekyin Creek-Crossing Bridge on Taungoo-Kyaukgyi-Shwekyin-Winkan Road in Shwekyin Township, Bago Region.

At the opening ceremony, the Union Minster made opening remarks and the Chief Minster explained the conditions of regional development, ethnic unity and communications development. Special Bridge Team 9 of Bridge Department constructed the 1,680-foot-long two-lane reinforced concrete bridge.

The upper section of the bridge is made up of reinforcement concrete and pre-stressed post-tension technology.

The bridge is one of the main bridges on Taungoo-Kyaukgyi-Shwekyin-Motpalin Road that connects eastern Bago Region with Mon State.

The opening of the bridge will bring the developments of economy, social, education and health to 36,000 people in 27 villages of 13 village-tracts in Motpalin side. —MNA ■

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

58 Myanmar nationals returned from Thailand tested negative for COVID-19

A total of 58 Myanmar nationals, who just served their sentences in Thailand, were tested negative for COVID-19 and they were allowed to return homes yesterday morning after they spent 21-day quarantine in Tachilek Township.

Local authorities gave them the COVID-19-symptom-free certificates and they will have to stay facility quarantine in the homes in respective areas. —Yar Sae ■

(Translated by Ei Phyu Phyu Aung)



Fifty-eight Myanmar nationals who tested negative for COVID-19 are allowed to return home on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Myanmar transfers two Thai nationals via Tachilek Friendship Bridge 2

MYANMAR officials transferred two Thai nationals, who were released from Kengtung jail, to Thai officials via Myanmar-Thai Friendship Bridge-2 in Tachilek of eastern Shan State yesterday afternoon.

These two Thai nationals are identified as Mr Saung Sa Karait Khun, aged 22 and Mr Cho Ti Won and they were arrested and sentenced to jail under section 144 of the criminal procedure code (Curfew Order) in 2019 and are now released from jail.

The Thai government delegation led by Meathee Phason and Priawp Urin Manopeaw accepted these two persons. —Yar Say (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)



Myanmar and Thai officials exchange documents on transfering two Thai nationals in Tachilek on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Global gold price hits record high by over $180 within July



(FILES) Salewomen wait for customers at a gold shop in Yangon on 11 April 2017. **PHOTO : PHOE KHWAR**

By Nyein Nyein

THE global gold price hit a high record by over US$180 within a month, according to the gold market.

The price was pegged at $1,784 per ounce on 1 July and hit an all-time high of above $1,970 per ounce on 31 July, which is an increase by over $180 in a month.

"The price of global gold has risen because of the mounting tension between America and China," said General Secretary U Ohn Myaing of Myanmar Gold Entrepreneurs Association (MGEA).

"The main reason for the rising of global gold price can be attributed to the tension between the US and China. There are also many other causes among which the Iran issue is one. People are buying gold, worried over the tension between the US and China which may lead to a substantial crisis. This is the reason why the price of global gold is rising in the market," he added.

Although the global gold price is a record high, the domestic gold price has not risen yet, even declining down to around K80,000 per tical. At present, the local gold price is standing at K1,295,000 per tical (0.578 ounces, or 0.016 kilograms) in the domestic market, he noted.

In early September last year, the price of pure gold reached an all-time record of above K1,300,000 per tical in the domestic market, while the price of gold was pegged at just $1,550 per ounce in the global market. At present, the local gold price is stable in the market because of the demand and supply of the gold being at the equilibrium in the local gold market, he stated.

Moreover, the dollar to kyat exchange rate was at K1,373 per dollar. During the past four months, the local gold price reached the lowest level of K1,148,000 (31 March) and the highest level of K1,218,600 (4 March). In April, the coronavirus risks shut down the gold market, and the market was reopened on 18 May, with the minimum rate of K1,214,100 (27 May) and the maximum rate of K1,236,000 (18 May). The price moved in the range of, K1,209,600 on 6 June and K1,219,500 on 1 June, according to gold traders.

With the global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs last year, reaching K1,000,000 per tical between 17 January and 21 February, crossing K1,100,000 (22 June to 7 August), climbing to K1,200,000 (7 August-4 September), and then reaching a record high of K1,300,000 on 5 September 2019.

(Translated by Hay Mar)

Oil, coal industry generates over K27,000 mln in 4 years

WITH the collection of transport charges from the legally permitted oil and coal industry in Magway region in accordance with the law, more than K27,000 million were earned in four years, according to the Magway regional government.

The regional government permitted the transport of 6.3 million barrels of oil from 2016-2017 financial year (FY) to 2019-2020FY and over 200,000 tonnes of coal from 2017-2018FY to 2019-2020FY, earning the revenue for the country.

"We have collected the revenue after negotiating with the attorney-general. Regarding hand-digging wells, we got over K3,000 million and in kind, a decrease from over K7,000 million in the previous government's period. The different amount can be attributed to how the imposition of taxes is being managed," said Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo of the Magway Region.

The regional government led by Dr Aung Moe Nyo has collected transport charges of K3,000 per barrel containing 50 gallons starting from 2 June 2016. The regional government has increased the transport charges to K5,000 per barrel starting from 1 October 2018, earning over K26,557 million as of 30 June 2020.

"We have collected taxes from 15 entrepreneurs. We haven't collected taxes from the illegal hand-digging wells," said U Myint Zaw, Minister for Natural Resources, Environment, Electric Power and Energy.

Regarding production and testing of minerals in Magway region, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation has granted 42 blocks to 32 companies while the Magway Region Mineral Block Scrutinizing Team granted 6 blocks. So, they have collected K3,000 per tonne of coal starting from 1 September 2017 and earned over K638 million, according to the official record. —Zayyatu (Magway)

(Translated by Hay Mar)

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Construction of inshore inspection jetty bridge in Kawthoung to complete in September

THE construction of inshore inspection jetty bridge necessary for the fisheries sector in Kawthoung will be reportedly completed in this September, according to the Kawthoung District Fisheries Federation (KDFF).

The fisheries entrepreneurs constructed the checkpoint by themselves in Kawthoung, where individual boats can be inspected. The government has granted permission to construct the bridge after the entrepreneurs have submitted their difficulties.

"The regional government allocated the fund to construct the inshore inspection jetty. About K100 million fund has been targeted from the regional government budget. The project has been already implemented. It has targeted to be completed in September. Currently, we have a self-constructed jetty bridge. We are also paying the tax to the government," said Vice-Chair U Myo Aung of Kawthoung District Fisheries Federation.

"Currently, only a boat can dock at the jetty. Upon completion of the jetty bridge, three boats can dock at the bridge because it is 200 feet in length. It can save time for the inspection team as well. The cargos can reach the market rapidly," he highlighted.

The no-fishing season will be finished in August and the fishing season will usher in September. There are more than 800 inshore fishing boats and about 40 offshore fishing vessels in Kawthoung District.—Zin Yaw Aye

(Translated by Hay Mar)



Workers carry an engine on their shoulder at a construction site in Kawthoung, Taninthayi Region on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO : ZIN YAW AYE**

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Deputy Minister U Aung Htoo discusses trade promotion, export sector



Officials are looking around the sales of foods at a shop on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo discussed with officials in Yangon about promotion of export sector.

The deputy minister and party arrived at the Myanmar International Trade Centre at the corner of Merchant Road and Bosonpat Road in Pabedan Township.

Director-General Daw Naw Mutar Kapaw from the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization and officials explained the local value-added products.

The deputy minister and party also inspected renovation and installation works at the offices for foreign trade representatives.

They also visited online sales centre of Myanmar Fruit, Flower and Vegetable Producer and Exporter Association, where the deputy minister advised to produce high-value goods for export markets from local products.

They looked around the sales of vegetables, fruits, electrical appliances and household items.

At the UMFCCI, the deputy minister and officials held a meeting with local companies which have secured export permits for rice and broken rice to China.

The meeting was attended by the officials from Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation, as well as the president of UMFCCI and the chairman of Myanmar Rice Federation. —MNA ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Kachin returnees receive relief aid, cash assistance



An MoSWRR official (L) provides relief items to a local woman (R) in Makhawyan Village in Mansi Township on 31 July 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

LOCAL authorities from the Disaster Management Department provided relief and cash assistance to the returnees in Makhawyan village of Mondeinpart village-tract in Bamaw district, Kachin State, yesterday.

Each of 28 households got K100,000, along with rice, cooking oil, salt and beans totally worth of K2,676,784 for all the families.

The returnees also received blankets, mosquito nets, maps, waterproofs, buckets and other household items donated by the UNHCR. —Rein (IPRD) ■

(Translated by Aung Khin)

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19

PEOPLE can face anxiety during COVID-19 and remember not to resolve things with anger, not act out of impulse, avoid alcohol and drug abuse, search for solutions together with family members and close friends, perform physical activities according to weather and health situation, eat nutritional foods, get enough sleep to resolve mental pressure.

Everyone can put these suggestions into practice to prevent their mental health from become fatigued and boost willpower.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Unit)

Notification on overcoming anxiety during COVID-19 spread

Anxiety is a natural process and emotion of life and can be acknowledged and resolved. Anxiety can become mental fatigue if it is left unchecked and become severe.

Anxiety symptoms include insomnia, excessive enthusiasm, fatigue, eating disorders, indigestion, headaches, joint pains, anger, fear, worry, sadness, guilt, memory issues, pessimism, hopelessness, loneliness, blaming others, and reduced productivity.

If these feelings are not resolved in a proper manner they can become mental fatigue and can lead to an inability to resolve challenges. This can lead to socioeconomic challenges and should seek motivational support before this stage is reached.

Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement & Myanmar Medical Association (Mental Health Group)

MONSOONS SLAM SOUTH ASIA

Growing toll from monsoon floods hampers South Asia virus efforts

THE death toll from monsoon floods across South Asia has increased to more than 340 people over recent weeks, with villages still submerged and tens of thousands displaced as authorities battle with rising coronavirus cases.

The torrential downpours across the densely populated region are critical to replenishing rivers and groundwater, but also cause widespread death and destruction.

In India's poorest state Bihar, home to 125 million people, 11 have died and at least four million have been affected by heavy rains, with homes and villages damaged.

More than 300,000 villagers were evacuated to relief camps and officials warned of further cloudbursts in the next two days.

The eastern state, which has a fragile healthcare system and has recorded more than 46,000 COVID-19 infections, entered a fresh two-week lockdown in mid-July as virus cases spiked.

Officials fear the flooding could worsen the spread of the infectious disease. "Reaching out to flood victims and providing them help is not easy due to fear of the pandemic," relief worker Mahendar Yadav said. In Assam, where at least 50 people have died in the past 10 days, floodwaters were receding as officials scrambled to help 1.5 million people whose homes and communities were damaged.

Villagers remain in relief camps

More than 37,000 villagers remain in relief camps and special attention was being given to health-related issues, Assam Disaster Management Authority coordinator Pankaj Chakrarvarty told AFP. "It's not always possible to maintain social distancing in the camps," said one evacuee, Ranjit Rabha.



The torrential downpours across the densely populated region cause widespread death and destruction. **PHOTO: NARINDER NANU AFP**

"Thankfully, here in our camp, we don't have any COVID-19 positive residents." At Assam's World Heritage-listed Kaziranga National Park, 143 animals have died so far, including 16 rare one-horned rhinos.

India's superstar cricket captain Virat Kolhi and Bollywood actress wife Anushka Sharma on Thursday pledged to support flood relief in Bihar and Assam.

Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra Jonas, who was born in Bihar, also promised to donate to relief efforts.

SOURCE: AFP

MONSOONS SLAM SOUTH ASIA

Health warnings as Western Europe swelters under heatwave

SWATHES of Western Europe wilted under intense heat Friday, with socially-distanced crowds seeking relief in fountains and pools as authorities warned of health and wildfire risks.

From Britain to Italy, temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) or more made face masks almost unbearable for many, as more cities begin requiring them outdoors to prevent surges in COVID-19 cases.

"Even in this stifling heat, it's better to put up with 38 degrees than catch the coronavirus," said Daniela Iannelli, a 55-year-old municipal employee in Rome.

Fourteen Italian cities were placed on high alert, while France issued warnings for around one-third of the country's 101 departments. Paris officials imposed driving restrictions to limit ozone pollution as tens of thousands of vacationers prepared to flee to cooler climes, according to the nation's traffic surveillance agency.



Dutch authorities warned that the beach in Zandvoort was getting dangerously crowded. **PHOTO: ANP/AFP**

Earlier Friday, a dramatic wildfire fanned by high winds on France's southwestern Atlantic coast was brought under control after it destroyed nearly a dozen homes and forced around 100 people to evacuate.

The blaze erupted late Thursday in the Chiberta forest park at Anglet, whose beaches just north of Biarritz draw surfers from around the world.

It was the latest of several that broke out in southern and central France this week, kicking off the annual fire season which officials warn could be worsened by the drought and dry heat.

"The heatwave requires the state to be vigilant, and everyone to be cautious," French Prime Minister Jean Castex said while visiting firefighters in Bourg-en-Bresse, southeastern France.

Officials also urged families and neighbours to check in on the elderly, and retirement homes were on high alert since air-conditioners are being discouraged over fears they could foster coronavirus contagions.

SOURCE: AFP

Floods may cost 20% of global GDP by 2100, study says

COASTAL flooding and storm surges could threaten assets worth up to 20 per cent of global wealth, according to research published Thursday highlighting the potential economic catastrophe that climate change may bring.

While much is known about the potential for global sea levels to rise as burning fossil fuels heats the planet and melts its frozen spaces, far less research looks at the impact of individual extreme flood events.

Researchers in Australia combined data on global sea levels during extreme storms with projections of sea level rises under different greenhouse gas emission scenarios. They then used the data to model maximum sea levels that may occur by 2100, and calculated the population and assets at risk from such flooding. The team found that under a high-emissions scenario, in which humanity fails to curb its carbon pollution, up to 287 million people would be at risk from extreme floods by the end of the century. Given the large number of megacities and financial capitals in coastal areas globally, they calculated the value of assets under threat to be more than $14 trillion (¥1.46 quadrillion) — around a fifth of global GDP. "What is (currently) seen as a once-in-a-100-year extreme sea level could occur once in a decade or less at most of the coastal locations," said Ebru Kirezci, from the University of Melbourne's Department of Infrastructure Engineering and lead study author.

Kirezci said this was significant because most urban planning today is conducted on the basis that such events will continue to be extremely rare.

"The new design directives might also consider updating the values with careful and detailed local modelling," she said.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that sea levels could rise as much as one meter by 2100 if emissions are not capped.

The study, published in Nature Scientific Reports, found that areas at increased risk of extreme flooding include southeastern China, Australia, Bangladesh, West Bengal and Gujarat in India, the U.S. states of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland and northwest Europe including the U.K., France and Germany.

SOURCE: AFP

1 AUGUST 2020
THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Roads are as dangerous as ever

DEADLY motorcycle crashes are increasing at an alarming rate in Myanmar, prompting the lawmakers of the Pyithu Hluttaw to discuss the issue.

In the discussion, MPs will urge the Union Government to enforce stricter traffic rules enforcement with punishment on violators and will touch upon what precautions should be taken in the future to prevent the road accidents.

According to the World Health Organization, about 65 per cent of deaths from the road accidents in Myanmar come from motorcycle crashes that occurred nationwide while the nationwide motorcycle accidents accounted for 49 per cent of the total mishaps in 2018, and claimed 2,376 lives and left 12,985 injured.

With the growing numbers of motorcycles and tricycles, which are the main mode of transportation especially in outskirts of towns and in rural areas, the roads are as dangerous as ever.

> Authorities are obliged to try to determine what is at the root of all road accidents and work together with all stakeholders to impose suitable punishment on those who do not obey the law and the traffic rules.

Though the government has banned the unauthorized installation of sidecars on motorcycles, the proliferation of tricycles plying the roads is continuing. Meanwhile, in some areas, motorcycles are also plying on the busy roads, but some road users are not wearing helmets.

This situation has shown the lack of traffic enforcement which can lead to unnecessary injury or even death.

The issue of motorcycle safety is becoming important as it hits close to home.

Authorities are obliged to try to determine what is at the root of all road accidents and work together with all stakeholders to impose suitable punishment on those who do not obey the law and the traffic rules.

Reckless driving, under the influence of alcohol, over-speeding, defective vehicles, and inclement weather are being blamed for most traffic accidents.

We must perform checks not just at central terminals, but also in the smaller terminals. Awareness campaigns need to be conducted with greater momentum and swift action needs to be taken against those who fail to comply with the rules and standards.

We must not to lose sight of the goal to reduce the death toll in traffic accidents by 50 per cent in 2020 from the toll recorded in the base year of 2013.

■ ■ ■

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PHEIC – HIGHEST LEVEL OF ALARM

WHO's emergency panel reviews pandemic

SIX months after sounding its top alarm over the new coronavirus outbreak, the WHO's emergency committee meets for a fourth time Friday to assess the raging pandemic.

The World Health Organization grouping, comprising around 20 members and advisers, can propose new recommendations or amend existing ones.

However, there is little doubt that the WHO will maintain the pandemic's status as a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC) -- its highest level of alarm.

At least 17 million people have caught the virus, more than 660,000 have died, and infections are still rampant.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has stressed that the UN health agency had declared a top-level public health emergency on January 30, when there were fewer than 100 cases and no deaths outside China, where the virus first emerged.



Thai soldiers take the temperatures of arriving passengers at Phuket International Airport, to check for symptoms of the COVID-19 coronavirus on 19 March, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

The WHO has been sharply criticized for the length of time it took to declare a PHEIC.

The United States, which accused the organization of being too close to China, officially began its withdrawal from the organization in July.

The agency has also been criticized for recommendations deemed late or contradictory, in particular on wearing masks, or the modes of transmission of the virus.

The WHO's COVID-19 technical lead Maria Van Kerkhove said Thursday that the organization had reacted immediately to the first signs of the pandemic, mobilizing its forces to act and inform.

Alongside her, the WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan said he had been surprised by how slowly some countries reacted.

"We did focus in the early days of this crisis on really driving our technical and operational assistance to countries that we would traditionally feel that need that assistance," he said.

"If I could go back and change anything, I think we would have also been better served to be offering that operational and technical assistance to countries where I think we made some assumptions about capacities that existed," he said.

SOURCE: AFP

■ ■ ■

HISTORIC CONTRACTIONS WERE RECORDED

PANDEMIC EFFECTS

Virus wreaks economic havoc as global cases top 17 million

THE scale of economic devastation from the pandemic was laid bare on Thursday as Western economies recorded historic slumps, just as resurgent caseloads forced many countries into agonizing new trade-offs between health and financial stability.

Six months after the World Health Organization declared a global emergency, the novel coronavirus has infected more than 17 million people worldwide.

The WHO warned Thursday that young people are "not invincible" and were helping to drive resurgences in many places that had largely curbed the disease.

"Spikes of cases in some countries are being driven in part by younger people letting down their guard during the northern hemisphere summer," said WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

COVID-19 has killed more than 668,000 people and is forcing governments into a persistent balancing act between saving lives and preventing economic devastation.

Nowhere is that challenge more evident than the world's hardest-hit nation -- also the world's biggest economy -- with the United States posting a second-quarter loss of 9.5 per cent compared with the same period a year ago, the worst figure on record.

If that trajectory carried through the entire year, its economy would collapse by nearly a third (32.9 per cent), the data showed.

Historic contractions were additionally recorded in Germany (10.1 per cent), Belgium (12.2 per cent), Austria (10.7 per cent) and Mexico (17 per cent).

Across the globe, companies were also taking a hit with Volkswagen, oil producer Shell, UK bank Lloyds and Japanese consumer electronics giant Panasonic all reporting huge losses.

With travel down to a trickle, aerospace giant Airbus said it burned through more than 12 billion euros in cash in the first half of the year, with a net loss of 1.9 billion euros ($1.4 billion) and plans to cut production by 40 per cent.

But several Big Tech firms delivered better-than-expected results Thursday, underscoring growing consumer reliance on giants like Amazon during the pandemic as well as their extraordinary economic power.

Apple profits rose eight per cent to $11.2 billion, Amazon meanwhile said profits nearly doubled to $5.2 billion and Facebook said its profits doubled to $5.2 billion compared with the same period last year.

Global daily cases are now approaching the 300,000 mark, with the curve showing no sign of flattening -- it took just 100 hours for one million new cases to be recorded.

The US counted 1,379 new deaths in the 24 hours before 8:30 pm Thursday (0030 GMT Friday), plus another 72,238 new infections.

And the country also recorded another grim milestone: the death of Buddy, the first US pet dog to test positive for the virus. The seven-year-old German shepherd died after suffering from difficulty breathing and other symptoms for several months.

In Japan, Tokyo's governor called for restaurants, bars and karaoke parlours to shut earlier as the capital reported a record number of new infections.

Sweden, whose controversial softer approach to curbing coronavirus has received worldwide attention, said it would encourage people to keep working from home into next year where possible, as the country passed 80,000 recorded cases.

And Mexico became the world's third hardest-hit country in terms of deaths as it notched more than 46,000 fatalities, according to a tally maintained by AFP.

Island resurgences

Two island countries that were early poster children for containing the virus offered warnings against complacency on Thursday.

In Australia, there were 723 positive tests in the southeastern state of Victoria alone, well beyond the previous nationwide record of 549 cases set on Monday.

And Iceland recorded its first hospitalisation since mid-May, as well as 31 new cases, forcing the government to reimpose social distancing and masks, and limit the size of gatherings to 100.

Hong Kong, which was also initially lauded for its coronavirus response, is struggling to balance fears of a third wave among its 7.5 million residents, which authorities fear could cripple the healthcare system, against anger at new restrictions.

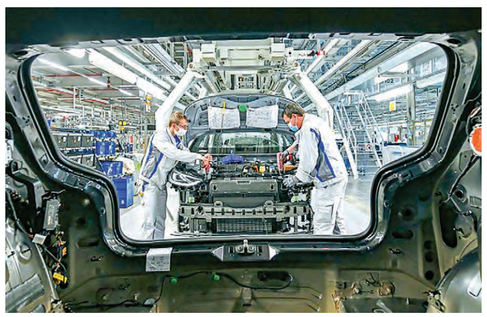
Just a day after restaurants were banned from serving customers indoors, the decision was reversed following a torrent of online criticism over images of mostly blue-collar workers forced to eat on pavements and in parks -- and even inside public toilets to escape a torrential downpour.

South Africa faces a similar dilemma and pushed back its nighttime curfew by an hour to 10 pm to help the devastated restaurant sector, despite a recent surge in cases.

Ivory Coast however bucked the trend, announcing that bars, nightclubs and cinemas would reopen on Friday.

The EU meanwhile carried out its fortnightly update to its list of safe countries. US travellers are still barred and Algeria was removed after a spike in cases.

The safe list currently consists of Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand, Tunisia and Uruguay -- and would also include China if Beijing reciprocated.



VW was one of the global companies reporting the impact of the pandemic on its results. **PHOTO: AFP**

SOURCE: AFP

■ ■ ■

Flood Bulletin
(Issued at: 17:00 hrs M.S.T on 31-7-2020)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (16:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyarwady River at Zalun has reached its danger level. It may continue to rise from the present water level about (1) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advertised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in Zalun Twonship to take precaution measure.

Flood Bulletin
(Issued at: 13:00 hrs M.S.T on 31-7-2020)

Flood condition of Ayeyawady River

According to the (12:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ayeyarwady River at Hinthada has reached its danger level. It may continue to rise above the present water level by about (1) foot during the next (3) days and may remain above its danger level.

Advisory

It is especially advertised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas in HinthadaTownship to take precaution measure.

Flood Warning
(Issued at 12:00 hrs M.S.T on 31-7-2020)

According to the (11:30) hrs M.S.T observation today, the water level of Ngawun River at Ngathiangchaung is observed as about (½) foot below its danger level. It may reach its danger level during the next (3) days.

It is especially advised to the people who settle near the river banks and low lying areas at Ngathiangchaung to take precaution measure.

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Friday 31stJuly, 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and weak elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 01st August, 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be scattered in Naypyitaw, Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway Regions, Kayah State, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing and Bago Regions, Shan, Chin and Rakhine States and widespread in the remaining Regions and States with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Ayeyarwady and Taninthayi Taninthayi Regions and Kayin and Mon States. Degree of certainty is (80%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon – Taninthayi Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)m.p.h. Sea will be moderate elsewhere in Myanmar waters. Wave height will be about (6-9) feet Deltaic, Gulf of Mottama, off and along Mon –Taninthayi Coasts and about (5-8) feet off and along Rakhine Coast.

RECOMMENDATION

Sweden encourages working from home until next year



The recommendation will remain in place until the New Year. **PHOTO: AFP**

SWEDEN, whose controversial softer approach to curbing COVID-19 has received worldwide attention, said Thursday it would keep encouraging people to work from home when possible, as the country passed 80,000 recorded cases.

Unlike most European nations, Sweden never imposed a lockdown and made headlines for having one of the highest per capita death tolls in the world.

The new recommendation, which is directed at those "who have the possibility to work from home", will remain in place until the New Year.

Aimed in part at reducing crowding on public transport, the measure is designed to make things easier for those who need to physically go to work.

The announcement came as officials noted several positive trends in Sweden, with falling numbers of new cases, especially serious cases in need of intensive care. But the country's Public Health Agency noted that "if our contacts go up again there is a considerable risk of a new spread during the autumn".

On Thursday, Sweden passed another milestone by reporting an additional 318 confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the total to 80,100.

A total of 5,739 deaths related to the novel coronavirus have been recorded in the country.

The country's relatively high number of cases has put it at odds with its neighbours, challenging the usual unity among Nordic countries. But on Thursday Denmark announced it was opening its border to all Swedes, whereas earlier it only allowed travellers from low-infection regions.

Most Swedes travelling to Norway are still subject to quarantine regulations and Finland only allows essential travel from Sweden. Schools in Sweden have remained open for under-16s throughout the coronavirus pandemic and it has not shuttered cafes, bars, restaurants and most businesses. Masks have been recommended only for healthcare personnel.

Swedish officials have argued that lockdowns only work temporarily and that drastic short-term measures are too ineffective to justify their impact.

SOURCE: AFP

"CRISIS OF UNPRECEDENTED MAGNITUDE"

Dutch airline KLM says to shed up to 5,000 jobs due to virus

DUTCH airline KLM said Friday it would shed up to 5,000 jobs due to a "crisis of unprecedented magnitude" caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The carrier, part of the Air France KLM group, said the cuts through the end of 2021 were necessary as it had made huge losses despite a 3.4-billion-euro ($4.0-billion) Dutch government bailout.The cuts would involve around 1,500 compulsory layoffs from KLM's current workforce of 33,000, the airline said.

There would also be 2,000 voluntary redundancies announced earlier this year, while further cuts would be made through non-renewal of 1,500 temporary contracts.

"KLM is in the throes of a crisis of unprecedented magnitude... Expectations are that the road to recovery will be long and fraught with uncertainty," KLM said in a statement.

"This means that KLM's structure and size must be rigorously adjusted even further in the years ahead. Consequently, a total of 4,500 to 5,000 positions in the entire KLM Group will cease to exist."

SOURCE: AFP



Airlines like KLM are cutting jobs as air traffic is set to remain below pre-coronavirus levels for at least a couple of years. **(AFP PHOTO/REMKO DE WAAL)**

BLOCKBUSTER EXHIBITION

Art in a pandemic: Tokyo show tests if fans will come

IT'S a blockbuster exhibition, featuring some of the biggest names in Japan's contemporary art scene. But will people flock to galleries in the midst of the global coronavirus pandemic?

That's the question on the mind of Mami Kataoka, director of the influential Mori Art Museum, which reopens on Friday after a five-month hiatus with one of its most high-profile Japanese art shows in years.

"We live in a time when we are asked, 'What is the role of museums and what is the role of art?'" Kataoka told AFP at a press preview of the "STARS" exhibit this week.

The exhibition was supposed to open in April, running through the summer to attract visitors in town for the Olympics, with works by leading Japanese art figures like Yayoi Kusama and Takashi Murakami. But the coronavirus has forced a year-long delay of the Games, and the museum closed its doors in February as infections began to climb in Japan.

"In this situation, it's difficult to manage (a museum)," Kataoka said.

The exhibition is going ahead despite the challenges, and even as the city's governor has warned of a second wave of infections in the capital.

The star-studded exhibition features well-known works such as Murakami's "Miss Ko2" sculpture imbued with Japanese "otaku" subculture, as well as Kusama's abstract Infinity Nets paintings.

It also showcases works by Hiroshi Sugimoto, Lee Ufan and Yoshitomo Nara, who is now preparing a major retrospective in Los Angeles.

Kataoka said the show features artists who burst onto the global art scene after struggling for years in relative obscurity. Some represent minimalist styles and others favour less traditional aesthetics, drawing from animation, pop culture and subcultures.

"I was grateful... that this museum was able to reopen with this powerful exhibit of works by artists with long careers."

SOURCE: AFP



Pieces by artist Yoshitomo Nara are among the works on display at a major exhibition of contemporary Japanese artists opening in Tokyo as coronavirus infections spike. **PHOTO: AFP**

Hong Kong postpones Sept. legislative election for 1 year



The Legislative Council election, which was set for Sept. 6, is now scheduled to be held on Sept. 5, 2021, to curb the epidemic, protect the health and safety of people and ensure a fair and open election. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

HONG KONG — Hong Kong's September legislative election will be postponed for a year due to health concerns amid the coronavirus pandemic and China's parliamentary advice will be sought for setting a legal basis to extend incumbent lawmakers' term of office, government leader Carrie Lam announced Friday.

The Legislative Council election, which was set for Sept. 6, is now scheduled to be held on Sept. 5, 2021, to curb the epidemic, protect the health and safety of people and ensure a fair and open election, Lam told reporters.

"To postpone the election is the toughest decision to make to date," Lam said. "The pandemic remains the most serious since January, the spread in the community is continuing and the risk of a major outbreak is rising."

Apart from public health concerns due to mass gatherings, Lam said that because of quarantine measures, overseas voters might not be able to return and those under quarantine might not be able to vote without risking cross-infection, so fairness of the election could be undermined.

She said delaying for a year, by invoking her emergency powers, is best for the cycle of legislative work arrangement, for avoiding judicial challenges and to give ample time for the outbreak to fade and for preparation work on the next election. —Kyodo ■

Nepal reopens Everest despite pandemic uncertainty

KATHMANDU — Nepal has reopened its mountains -- including Everest -- for the autumn trekking and climbing season in a bid to boost the struggling tourism sector, officials said Friday, despite coronavirus uncertainty.

The Himalayan country shut its borders in March just ahead of the busy spring season when hundreds of mountaineers usually flock to the country, costing jobs and millions of dollars in revenue.

A nationwide lockdown was lifted last week, and Nepal is now open "for tourism activities, including mountaineering and trekking." Mira Acharya of the tourism department told AFP.

The government will permit international flights to land in the country from August 17.

The decision comes despite over 1,000 new coronavirus infections reported this week, with a total of 19,547 cases.

Officials were "working on" safety protocols Acharya added, including for how long visitors would have to quarantine on arrival.

Mingma Sherpa of Seven Summit Treks, one of the biggest Nepali expedition organizers, said that clients were calling, but were waiting to find out how long arrivals will have to quarantine for.—AFP ■

Fears of COVID-19 resurgence subdue festival preparations in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan will observe the Islamic festival of Eid-ul-Adha on Saturday amid fears that the celebrations could lead to a resurgence of COVID-19 coronavirus infections.

Preparations for the celebrations of Eid-ul-Adha or the feast of sacrifice, one of two holidays celebrated by Muslims worldwide each year, have largely been subdued due to fear of spread of the virus the resultant financial crunch and economic recession.

The government has repeatedly called for exercising caution during the celebrations.

Special protocols have been announced by authorities for the observance, which require people to maintain prescribed distance during gatherings, wear masks, use sanitizers and avoid travel.—Kyodo ■

Virus rules leave Bollywood's low-paid army stricken

MUMBAI — India's coronavirus lockdown made little difference to Bollywood superstars but for the industry's vast army of low-paid, unskilled workers it meant unemployment, hunger and homelessness -- with no end in sight even as shoots gradually resume.

Fahim Shaikh used to earn 800 rupees ($11) a day as a "spot boy" on sets, doing odd jobs such as making tea. When Bollywood hit pause on productions in March, the 23-year-old could no longer pay rent.

"I just wandered up and down, asking strangers for help and sleeping outside cafes," he told AFP. Like many starry-eyed newcomers, he came to Mumbai in pursuit of an acting career before his dreams gave way to the pressures of the daily grind in India's most expensive city.

The hugely successful Hindi film industry is tentatively coming back to life but with strict rules including curbs on the number of people allowed on set.

This means that jobs for people like Shaikh are now few and far between.

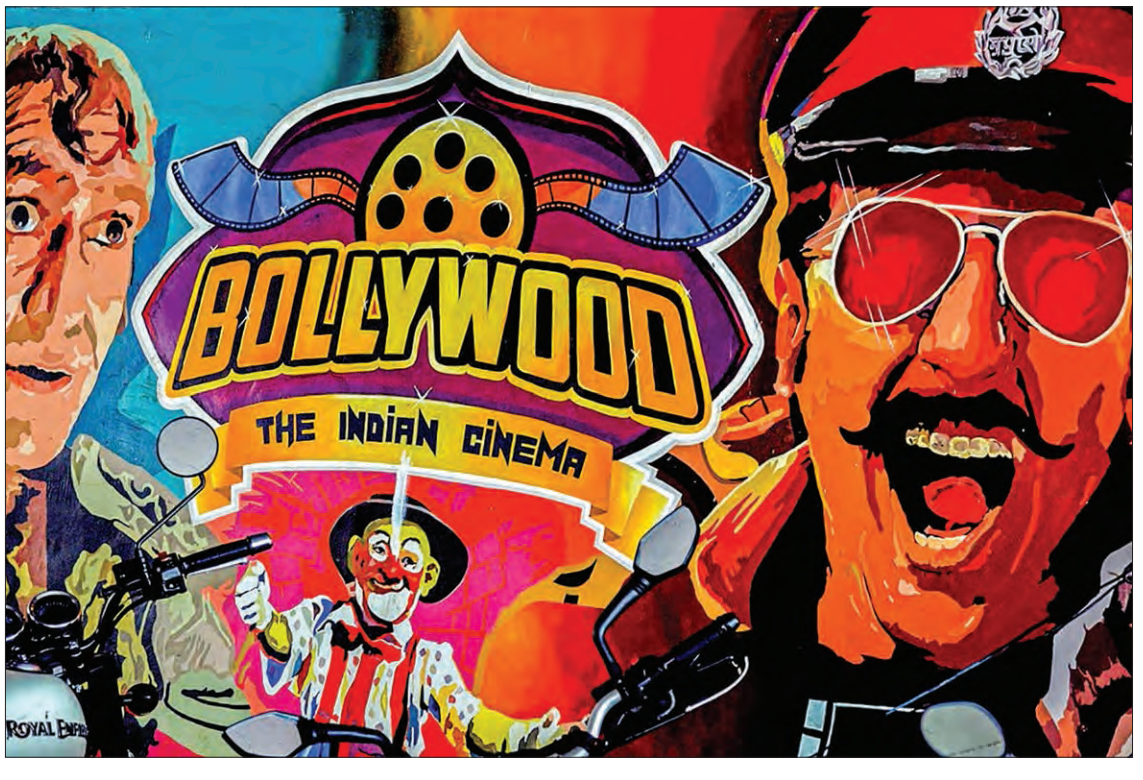
"I am ready to do anything, I desperately need work," he said.

'The littlest players'

The lockdown cast a spotlight on India's extreme inequality with well-heeled citizens able to hibernate safely at home while watching shocking scenes of a huge migrant worker exodus play out on their television and smartphone screens. That chasm between the haves and have-nots is perhaps even more pronounced in Bollywood, where jet-setting megastars rub shoulders with tens of thousands of extras, spot boys and other junior crew members who exist on the margins of the glamorous industry.

"The spot boys are considered the littlest players, till food arrives late on a set," actress Richa Chadha wrote on her blog highlighting the "disastrous" effects of the lockdown. During her half-century-long stint as an extra, Sayeda Mumani has worked alongside virtually every major actor, from 1970s matinee idol Rajesh Khanna to superstar Shah Rukh Khan.

In a good month, the 68-year-old scraped together around 14,000 rupees. But her income dried up after shoots came to a standstill, and she has not worked for months.—AFP ■



In this picture taken on July 21, 2020, a wall mural with images of Bollywood actors, is seen under a road bridge in Mumbai. **PHOTO: (AFP/SUJIT JAISWAL)**

Australia unveils law forcing tech giants to pay for news



Facebook and Google have strongly opposed any move forcing them to share advertising revenue. **PHOTO: AFP**

SYDNEY — Australia unveiled a draft law Friday (July 31) to force Google and Facebook to pay news media for their content in a "world-leading" initiative sure to prompt a confrontation with the digital giants.

Treasurer Josh Frydenberg announced the "mandatory code of conduct" to govern relations between the struggling news industry and the tech firms after 18 months of negotiations failed to bring the two sides together.

In addition to payment for content, the code covers issues like access to user data, transparency of algorithms and ranking of content in the platforms' news feeds and search results.

"Nothing less than the future of the Australian media landscape is at stake with these changes," Frydenberg said, calling the legislation a "world-leading regulatory framework".

He said legislation implementing the code would be introduced into parliament in August and include "substantial penalties" that could cost the tech companies hundreds of millions of dollars.

While the code will eventually apply to any digital platform using Australian news content, Frydenberg said it would initially focus on Facebook and Google, two of the world's richest and most powerful companies.

Google responded quickly, saying it was "deeply disappointed" with the proposal.

"The government's heavy-handed intervention threatens to impede Australia's digital economy and impacts the services we can deliver to Australians," said Mel Silva, Google's managing director for Australia and New Zealand.

Facebook issued a terse one-line response that hinted it could reconsider its activities in Australia if the proposals were implemented.

"We are reviewing the government's proposal to understand the impact it will have on the industry, our services and our investment in the news ecosystem in Australia," said Will Easton, Facebook's local manager.—AFP ■

In Brazil, coronavirus crisis fuels new favela

SAO PAULO — When Priscila Tomas da Silva's husband lost his job loading trucks because of coronavirus shutdown measures in Sao Paulo, they faced a stark choice: pay the rent, or feed their six children.

So they built a shack in a new favela emerging on the city's northern outskirts, a symbol of the devastation the pandemic is causing in Brazil.

The favela, in the Jardim Julieta neighbourhood, has sprouted at an informal parking lot for semi-trucks.

About four months ago, a crush of newly homeless people began turning it into a full-blown favela, or shantytown, as the fallout of COVID-19 wreaked havoc on Brazil, the country hit second-hardest in the world by the pandemic after the United States.

Now, nearly 700 families live here. More seem to arrive all the time, carrying furniture on their heads through unpaved alleys against a backdrop of hammering and drilling -- the sound of new plywood shacks going up.

Most houses do not have bathrooms yet, and many have plastic tarps for roofs.

Conditions are crowded, hygiene a challenge and social distancing virtually non-existent, highlighting how vulnerable favelas are to the virus.

But people are trying hard to make it home.—AFP ■



Aerial view of the Jardim Julieta favela, in the outskirts of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on July 15, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

Poland says US to deploy troops on eastern border

WARSAW — Washington will deploy at least 1,000 soldiers in Poland and oversee forces on NATO's eastern flank, Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak said Friday after the US announced a massive troop pullout from Germany. US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said on Wednesday the Pentagon will be sending home about 6,400 military personnel from Germany, and move nearly 5,600 to other NATO countries, including Italy and Belgium.

"At least 1,000 new soldiers will be deployed in our country," Blaszczak told the Jedynka public radio.

"We will have an American command in Poland. This command will manage the troops deployed along NATO's eastern flank," he said. "It will be the most important centre for ground forces in our region," he said, adding that Warsaw and Washington had sealed a deal for military cooperation.—AFP ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

Florida hits another record virus death toll as hurricane looms

TALLAHASSEE — Hurricane Isaias was barreling towards Florida on Friday, a day after the state registered a record 253 coronavirus deaths and authorities closed down some COVID-19 testing centres to prepare for the looming storm.

Florida has emerged as a major new epicentre of the US battle against the disease, with confirmed cases recently surpassing New York and now second only to California.

The state toll has leapt over the past week and more than 6,500 people have died from the disease there, according to health officials.

Thursday marked the third consecutive day the state hit a new record for coronavirus deaths.

Isaias is expected to strike Florida over the weekend as authorities struggle to contain the disease and is now coursing through the Atlantic Ocean with wind speeds of 80 miles (130 kilometres) per hour, according to the Miami-based National Hurricane Centre.—AFP ■

Wildfire forces dozens to evacuate French surfing hotspot

ANGLET — A dramatic forest fire in the middle of a French coastal resort was contained early Friday after destroying nearly a dozen homes and forcing around 100 people to evacuate overnight, officials said.

The blaze erupted late Thursday in the Chiberta forest park at Anglet in southwest France, whose beaches just north of Biarritz draw surfers from around the world.

Soaring temperatures that reached nearly 42 degrees Celsius (107 Fahrenheit) fanned the flames that burned 165 hectares (400 acres) in total.

"The fire is under control, things have improved since last night though there are still two or three hot spots, so there's still a risk it could flare up again," Anglet's mayor, Claude Olive, told AFP.—AFP ■

Pandemic to delay Japan achieving fiscal health to FY 2029

TOKYO — Japan may be able to restore fiscal health in fiscal 2029 under the most optimistic growth scenario, two years later than previously estimated due to the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the government's latest projections showed Friday.

Previously, the government had projected Japan could attain a surplus in the primary balance -- tax revenues minus spending except to pay interest on past debt -- in fiscal 2027, but now it forecasts the country might move into the black with a 300 billion yen ($2.88 billion) surplus in the year through March 2030.

The delay would be caused by a decline in tax revenues since earlier this year due to the pandemic and growing expenditures to ease the virus's impact, according to the semiannual long-term estimates.

The projections were made under a scenario assuming the world's third-largest economy will achieve real growth of over 2 per cent and nominal growth of 3 per cent annually for five years from fiscal 2021, which begins next April.

If Japan's gross domestic product growth remains at relatively low levels of below 2 per cent both in real and nominal terms in fiscal 2024 and later, the economy would have a primary deficit -- of 10.3 trillion yen -- even in fiscal 2029, according to the projections.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said at a government meeting, where the estimates were presented, that the projections this time showed that the country's "mid- to long-term economic and fiscal conditions are severe," and vowed to "continue steadily promoting integrated economic and fiscal reforms."—Kyodo ■



The projections were made under a scenario assuming the world's third-largest economy will achieve real growth of over 2 per cent and nominal growth of 3 per cent annually for five years from fiscal 2021, which begins next April. **PHOTO: KYODO**

North Korea returns to growth despite sanctions: Seoul

SEOUL — North Korea's sanctions-hit economy defied the impact of international restrictions to grow for the first time in three years in 2019, the South's central bank said Friday.

Nuclear-armed Pyongyang is highly secretive and refuses to publish growth statistics of its own, leaving outsiders reliant on estimates drawn up from other sources.

In Seoul, the Bank of Korea (BOK) said the North's gross domestic product rose by 0.4 per cent in 2019, after shrinking by 4.1 per cent the previous year.

The 2018 figure represented the second consecutive contraction in the face of increasingly tough international sanctions over its banned weapons programmes. But construction turned positive last year, the BOK said in a statement, as did the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector, while contraction in mining and manufacturing narrowed.



Construction in North Korea turned positive last year, Seoul said, as did the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

The North is banned from exporting coal, iron and lead under UN Security Council measures imposed in 2017, and their sales slumped in the following year, setting a low comparative base for the latest figures.

Trade in textiles, once a key export, is banned in both directions.

Nonetheless total exports rose by 14.4 per cent to $280 million in 2019, according to the BOK, with the biggest increases in clocks and watches, along with footwear, hats and wigs.

Under leader Kim Jong Un the North has repeatedly promised to raise living standards and has quietly sought to liberalize its long-moribund economy to allow market forces to play a greater role.

But it has not proclaimed widespread reforms, insisting that it is following the ideological path of Kim's grandfather, the North's founder Kim Il Sung and his son and successor Kim Jong Il.

It remains deeply impoverished, with around 40 per cent of the population in need of food aid according to UN estimates.— AFP ■

France suffers record GDP plunge

PARIS — France's economy slumped a record 13.8 per cent in the second quarter as businesses bore the brunt of a strict coronavirus lockdown that slammed consumer spending, the INSEE statistics agency said Friday.

The seasonally-adjusted drop in gross domestic product (GDP) from the first quarter was not as steep as many analysts had expected, but worse than the performance of most of France's eurozone peers.

"GDP's negative developments in first half of 2020 is linked to the shutdown of 'non-essential' activities in the context of the implementation of the lockdown between mid-March and the beginning of May," the INSEE said in a statement.

The agency also revised the figure for the first quarter -- when lockdowns just started to be implemented -- to a 5.9-per cent contraction from the 5.3 per cent it had previously estimated.

The French economy has now shrunk for three consecutive quarters, a recession that analysts say is likely to persist even as spending begins to revive.

Household consumption, a main driver of the economy, tumbled 11 per-cent during the quarter. —AFP ■

China to impose tougher punishments for financial violations

BEIJING — China will impose tougher penalties for financial violations in the banking and insurance sectors, according to a new regulation on administrative punishments in the sectors that will come into effect on Aug. 1.

The regulation, issued by the China Banking and Insurance Regulatory Commission, integrates and optimizes the administrative penalty procedures for the banking and insurance industries, and establishes the basic principles on which such penalties are based.

An increase in the severity of punishments is highlighted in the regulation, particularly for repeat offenders, those failing to cooperate with regulatory enforcement, and violations causing serious consequences.

The regulation stipulates both the punishment of institutions and the holding to account of individuals responsible for transgressions. — Xinhua ■

INVITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Kayah State Mineral Production Company Limited, for the sale Tin, Tungusten, Scheelite mixed concentrates Mawchi mixed ore (84.00) metric ton (Sn-36.64%,WO_3-21.12%).

Tender documents are available during office hour at Kayah State Mineral Production Company Limited office, No (22) Pyay Road (7) mile, Mayangone Township, Yangon Myanmar from (4-8-2020).

Sealed bids are to be submitted to the office, not later than (11-8-2020) 15:00 pm, which no form will be accepted no telegraph/telex proposal will be accepted.

For detail information, please contact to the Phone (01-656579), email address - kayahstatemineralproduction09@gmail.com

Key Challenges for Myanmar on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage

(Mar Lar Aung - Culture)



Thanaka plantations in Sagaing Region. Thanaka cultivators has increased as domestic and international demand has increa

"The cultural heritage of a nation or region is not solely composed of monuments and museum collections, but also of living intangible expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants.." – *UNESCO*

MYANMAR has a rich and diverse culture and among them, the culture rooted in everyone's heart is the intangible culture with no visual manifestation, which includes daily routines, traditions, rituals and customs of a person. The cultural heritage can be passed down from generation to generation verbally with or without practical training. Whether or not there is a record, the evolution from the past to present is the emergence of cultural heritage.

Since Myanmar is one of the most civilized nations in Southeast Asia (SEA) it also experienced a significant change in the past seventy-years as other SEA countries. Following a tumultuous period of decolonization, civil-war, and the challenges of nation-building, the region has emerged poised to play an important part in the forthcoming "Asian Century" and nomination of World Heritage List and other records of Tangible, Intangible and Natural Heritages provide a blueprint for deepening and widening cultural cooperation and awareness of SEA Cultures across the region.

In recent years, due to the ageing of practitioners and the lack of successors for their arts and crafts, a great amount of Intangible Cultural Heritage is facing the danger of extinction. That is why countries realized that urgent steps must be taken to preserve and promote intangible heritage. In addition to creating an atlas of the world's languages in danger of disappearing, there are some tribes and languages which are lost day by day also in Myanmar.

Since Myanmar is one of the largest repositories of tangible heritage in the world, a major part of this heritage has been preserved through ancient monuments, sites and antiquities of varied nature. The range of such relics from the past, is indeed very vast and covers a long span of time i.e. prehistoric to colonial times. The monuments, sites and antiquities protected and maintained so far by the Archaeology Department are only a fraction of the total repository of the country. However, most of these have not been documented in a uniform format which can provide a common platform to the scholars, researchers and planners for reference, research and its management in a diligent manner. Not only the Inventory but those implementing works being carried out annually are work-based depending on the allotted budget, instead of theme with high concepts and nature of sustainability and thorough assessment.



Traditional Gold Leaf Industry.

Why ICH

Intangible cultural heritage is renowned as a wealth of knowledge to be used in many aspects of life. Women hold a special place in the transmission of intangible heritage and have knowledge that contributes to their empowerment and revenue generation. Moreover, ICH is also vital for maintaining cultural diversity in the face of globalization. It is noted that understanding ICH contributes to intercultural dialogue, encourages mutual respect and ensures social cohesion. Now it is accepted that the importance of ICH is not the cultural manifestation itself; it lies in its significance to communities. Its value is both intangible and tangible, linked to the social and economic effects of the knowledge and skills transmitted through it.

Ratification of the 2003 Convention

Background

UNESCO adopted the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore as the first legal instrument towards the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage in 1989. With this Recommendation which reflected the ideas of the earlier Conference in Mexico City, UNESCO conducted some promotional programmes for raising awareness of this Recommendation. In the late 1990s, there was a conference held for the assessment of this Recommendation, which pointed out some problems to be considered in



eased. **PHOTO: WIN OO (ZAYARTINE)**

drafting the Convention.

In 1997, UNESCO launched the programme of Proclamation of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, intending to raise awareness of the importance of intangible heritage. This programme proclaimed a total of 90 masterpieces between 2001 and 2005 and caused the movement towards the 2003 Convention.

Intangible cultural heritage refers to "traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts", its 2003 Convention is unlike other UNESCO conventions which have stated its purposes as :

a. to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage;
b. to ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned;
c. to raise awareness at the local, national and international levels of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage, and of ensuring mutual appreciation thereof;
d. to provide for international cooperation and assistance]

According to the 2003 Convention, the Intangible Cultural Heritage is defined as the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

Since Myanmar values the cultural heritage and understands the importance to safeguard its cultural heritage, ratified the UNESCO's Convention on the Safeguarding of Cultural Heritage on May 7, 2014. In order to be recognized and honoured with international cooperation. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO) announced the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the 32nd Session of General Assembly, which was held from 29 September to 17 October 2003 in Paris, France.

Safeguarding of Myanmar's Intangible Cultural Heritage

Myanmar has been traditionally practising the conservation of culture throughout its history. The transmission of Myanmar culture from the ancestors to today's youths has been alive for centuries and it performs like living cultures.

The Government established the Ministry of Culture in 1952 after the independence of Myanmar and the Department of Cultural Institute under the Ministry of Culture, with the tasks of identifying the cultural traditions and customs that are passed down from generation to generation in Myanmar. The various functions of the different departments, such as doing research; presenting performances; displaying antiquities of Myanmar and its ethnic cultures related objects in museums; extending the libraries in all states and regions, are in a way of promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage which is incredibly rich in the country.

The Department of Archeology also has a number of cultural archetypes, such as ancient site, temple, and mural painting, stucco, etc... Archaeological excavations have been carried out in ancient sites of Myanmar since the British colonial time last for more than a hundred years ago. In 2007, the Department of Cultural Institute was merged with the Department of Archeology and named Department of Archaeology, National Museum and National Library. In 2013, the National Library, together with the Department of Historical Research, formed a new department, which is reorganized as the Department of Historical Research and National Library. At present, the Department of Archaeology and National Museum is dedicated to the sustainable development of Myanmar intangible culture, tangible culture and its cultural activities.

The Department of Fine Arts also offers the degree courses on arts such as painting, sculpture, music and dramatic art to help keep the Myanmar culture alive from the two universities Culture and Arts in Yangon and Mandalay in 1993 and 2001 respectively. Furthermore, the two art and dance schools are opened to spread the heritage of Myanmar traditional music and dramatic arts in and out of the country.

The Historical Research Department was put under the Ministry of Culture in 2007 and later merged with the National Library. The Department of Historical Research and National Library has to make research on Myanmar history and the collection of the ancient manuscript such as Palm-Leave and Parabite and as the national repository.

In 2016, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Culture merged as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture, and those activities related to religious affairs and cultural activities are being carried out. At present, the survival of tangible and intangible cultural heritage has been endangered due to climatic, natural and manmade effects. In recent years, there is also an increasing trend of illicit trafficking of antiquities from Myanmar. This is mainly due to lack of public awareness, ignorance of law/act and also about the importance of documentation and preservation. There are few cities in the country where a number of important monuments and heritage buildings has been listed from time to time by different institutions and organizations but there is no comprehensive database at one place. To address these issues, with the objective to document unprotected monuments and sites from both secondary sources and antiquities from the primary source in a prescribed format, the departments under the Ministry of Culture are undertaking those works. There are various available sources for documenting this heritage which needs to be utilized and collated through a mission approach to create a credible aational data base.

Activities in accordance with the Convention

In line with the purpose of the 2003 Convention, as mentioned in Chapter 1, the following five domains are defined by UNESCO in order to make Myanmar cultural heritage more visible:

a. Oral Traditions and Expressions, including Language as vehicles for Intangible Cultural Heritage,(folk stories/ folktales, ancient manuscripts, traditional games)
b. Performing Arts (folk dances/visual arts, vocal arts, music)
c. Social Practices, Rituals and Festive events (Including social customs, festivals)
d. Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe (including traditional knowledge, local genius, traditional medicine)
e. Traditional Craftsmanship (painting, sculpture, traditional food)

According to Chapter 2 of the Organs of the Convention, the General Assembly holds regular conventions once every two years. Moreover, if it is decided that it needs to be held, whether requested an emergency meeting is convened when at least one-third of committees or consortiums are requested. Myanmar officials always participate in the meetings.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



Myanmar Thanaka bark being sold in the market. **PHOTO: MIN HTET AUNG (MAN SUB- PRINTING HOUSE)**

WLC to stream replay matches on YouTube this month

WORLD Lethwei Championship (WLC) will show best Lethwei replay matches on its YouTube channel this month, according to the statement with the WLC.

WLC also promised to bring some excitement for Lethwei fans from around the world by replaying the greatest Lethwei bouts in WLC history.

The live video will be shown every Monday on the WLC YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/c/worldlethwei, said the statement.

"Check out our YouTube channel for more great Lethwei videos. If you don't want to miss incredible Lethwei action, subscribe to our YouTube channel and click the bell icon to get notifications," said WLC officials on their statement.

There will be five replay matches to be shown this month of Myanmar Standard Time.

First thrilling replay: Saw Ba Oo vs Tha Pyay Nyo will be shown on 3 August 2020 at 7 pm.

Second fantastic replay: Kyar Pouk vs Htet Aung Oo will be streamed on 10 August 2020 at 7 pm.

The third fabulous replay: Phoe La Pyae vs Rin Saroth will be on 17 August 2020 at 7 pm.

The fourth impressive replay: Pite Htwe vs Ye Yint Aung will be shown on 24 August at 7 pm and the fifth amazing replay: Yan Naing Tun vs Saw Ba Oo will be shown on 31 August 2020 at 7 pm. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

AFC Cup: Viet Nam to host ASEAN Zone group matches

THE Vietnam Football Federation (VFF) recently announced that Viet Nam would host the AFC Cup 2020 ASEAN Zone Groups F and G matches, scheduled to be held on 23-29 September 2020.

The Group F matches will take place at the Thong Nhat Stadium in Ho Chi Minh City while the Group G matches will play at Quang Ninh's Cam Pha Stadium, according to the VFF.

Next, centralized venue for the South Zone matches in Group E will be seen in the Maldives, and the tourney will take place from 23 October to 4 November 2020, according to the AFC.

The winner of the group will be crowned south zonal champions and will qualify for the inter-zone semifinals which will play on 24 and 25 November 2020, the statement said.

Single-leg ASEAN zonal semifinals and final will also be confirmed after the AFC Cup 2020 knockout stage draw which will be held at the Headquarters of the Asian Football Confederation on 27 August 2020, according to the AFC. —Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Saudi-backed investors pull out of Newcastle deal

LONDON — A Saudi-backed consortium on Thursday announced it had ended its bid to buy Newcastle United after months of waiting for approval from the Premier League.

The investment group, which included the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF), PCP Capital Partners and billionaire brothers David and Simon Reuben, had reportedly struck a £300 million ($391 million) deal to buy the club from unpopular owner Mike Ashley in April.

The PIF, chaired by Prince Mohammad bin Salman, had been set to take an 80 per cent stake under the proposed deal, which was criticized by human rights groups.

"With a deep appreciation for the Newcastle community and the significance of its football club, we have come to the decision to withdraw our interest in acquiring Newcastle United Football Club," the group said in a statement.

"Unfortunately, the prolonged process under the current circumstances coupled with global uncertainty has rendered the potential investment no longer commercially viable."

Newcastle finished 13th in the recently completed Premier League season to secure another year of lucrative television rights.

However, there is deep uncertainty over the financial fallout from the coronavirus pandemic, with no date set for fans to return to stadiums. — AFP ■

Premier League looking at clinical passports solution for fans' return

LONDON — Clinical passports may be the solution in getting fans back to football stadia, the Premier League's chief executive Richard Masters said on Friday.

Masters says having defied the sceptics in resuming and bringing the season to a climax -- behind closed doors -- after the hiatus caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the next step was to resolve the supporters' conundrum.

The 2020/21 Premier League and lower-tier English Football League begin their new seasons on September 12 and Masters said in a column for The Tiimes that every solution was being examined to give fans the chance to watch their team again.

"We are also willing to see how we can support the development of "clinical passports" —- an app-based system that looks at all symptoms and other COVID-19 contributing factors — as well as other measures," he wrote. Masters said the EPL was seeking to work with local councils on transport solutions.— AFP ■



Fans unfurl a huge flag of Everton's Italian head coach Carlo Ancelotti in the crowd ahead of the English Premier League football match between Everton and Crystal Palace at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north west England on February 8, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

FA Cup final gives Arteta chance to prove Arsenal are going places



Mikel Arteta, the head coach of Premier League club Arsenal.
PHOTO: AFP

LONDON — Mikel Arteta insists even winning the FA Cup final against Chelsea on Saturday will not salvage Arsenal's season, but a trophy just eight months into his first managerial role will strengthen the impression the Gunners now have the right man in charge to right the ship.

Arteta won the FA Cup as captain when Arsenal ended a nine-year trophy drought in 2014.

Yet despite winning the competition twice more in the six years since, standards have continued to slip at the Emirates since Arsene Wenger's departure two years ago.

Despite an upturn since Arteta's appointment in December, eighth place in the Premier League was the Londoners worst league finish in 15 years.

"For me this club deserves the best and you have to be fighting for every title," said the Spaniard on the prospect of silverware and a place in the Europa League next season redeeming a miserable campaign.

"Obviously after everything that happened, if we are able to win the final and qualify for Europe, we can say it's okay. But it's not the level for this football club."

The Europa League may be the poor relation to the riches and prestige of the Champions League, but failure to qualify for European football at all for the first time since the 1995/96 season would be a further blow to Arsenal's already fragile finances.— AFP ■