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 65 Myanmar 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)
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 Thangangyun Township, Yangon, yesterday.

Union Minister for Commerce 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

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)

18 Myanmar nationals enter Chinshwehaw border town in returning home

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)

343 Myanmar migrant workers return home via Myawady border

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

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 Construction Minister U Han Zaw officially opened Sittoung River-Crossing Bridge 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 Minister 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 Bago 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 Minister made opening remarks and the Chief Minister 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-Kyaungyi-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 home yesterday morning after they spent 21-day quarantine in Tachileik 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

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-Thailand Friendship Bridge 2 in Tachileik 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 Meethaw Phason and Priawp Urin Manopeaw accepted these two persons. —Yar Sae (IPRD)

(Translated by Khine Thazin Han)
Global gold price hits record high by over $180 within July

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 corona-virus 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 being managed by gold traders.

With the global gold prices on the uptick, the domestic price hit fresh highs last year, reaching K3,000,000 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 K3,200,000 on 5 September 2019.

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

WTTH 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 transportation of 6.3 million barrels of oil from 2016-2017 financial year (FY) to 2019-2020FY and over 290,000 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)

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 reported 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)
Kachin returnees receive relief aid, cash assistance

DEPUTY Minister for Commerce U Aung Htoo discussed trade promotion, export sector

PHOTO: MNA

Kachin returnees receive relief aid, cash assistance

LOCAL authorities from the Disaster Management Department provided relief and cash assistance to the returnees in Makhawyan village of Moneinpart 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 impulsive, 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 villagers 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 replenish 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 Mahendra 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 Chakravarty told AFP. “It’s not always possible to maintain social distancing in the camps,” said one evacuee, Ranjit Rabha.

Swathes of 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 heat and wildfire risks.

From Britain to Italy, temperatures nearing 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) or more have been recorded over recent weeks, with villages still submerged and tens of thousands displaced as authorities battle with rising coronavirus cases.

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.

“Even in this stilling 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 181 departments. Paris officials imposed driving restrictions to limit ozone pollution as tens of thousands of vacationers prepared to flee the nation’s traffic surveillance agency.

Earlier Friday, a dramatic wildfire fanned by high winds in 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.

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

SOURCE: AFP

Health warnings as Western Europe swelters under heatwave

Health warnings as Western Europe swelters under heatwave

Greens and the International Energy Agency have warned that heat could increase the risk of wildfires and other extreme weather.

People over recent weeks have been affected by heavy rains, with homes and villages damaged.

“Thankfully, here in our camp, we don’t have any COVID-19 positive residents,” said one evacuee, Ranjit Rabha.

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.

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

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 37 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 (Y1.46 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

PHOTO: ANP/AFP

SOURCE: AFP

SOURCE: AFP
Roads are as dangerous as ever

**OPINION**

Dreadly motorcycle crashes are increasing at an alarming rate in Myanmar, prompting the lawmakers of the Pyithu Hluttaw to enact a new law. 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 Organisation, about 61 percent of deaths from the road accidents in Myanmar come from motorcycle riders and will touch upon what precautions should be taken. The base year of 2013.

The law and the violators do not obey on those who 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. 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.

Roads, the main mode of transportation especially in outskirts of towns and in rural areas, the roads are as dangerous as ever. 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, and road users are not wearing helmets.

This situation has shown the lack of traffic control enforcement which can lead to unnecessary injury or even death. The issue of motorcycle safety is becoming important at all levels.

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Sweden encourages working from home until next year

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

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 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

“CRISIS OF UNPRECEDENTED MAGNITUDE”

“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 in 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

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)
Hong Kong postpones Sept. legislative election for 1 year

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.

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.

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.

“As shoots have dried up after shoots came to a standstill, and she has not worked for months,” —AFP

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.

Fear 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.

In a good month, the 68-year-old Rukh Khan earned 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.

“If 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 besides his dreams gave way to the pressures of the daily grind in India’s most expensive city.

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.

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

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 in 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.

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.

“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 added, saying that Warsaw and Washington had sealed a deal for military cooperation.”

Poland says US to deploy troops on eastern border
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 might move into surplus except to pay interest in the primary balance — tax revenues minus spending — in the primary balance — tax revenues minus spending — in the third fiscal year after it forecast that the country might move into surplus in fiscal 2027, but now it forecasts the country might move into surplus in fiscal 2029, according to the projections.

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

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 contraction 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.

The North is banned from exporting coal, iron and lead under UN Security Council measures imposed in 2017, and its 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 $820 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 II.

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

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

INVIITATION TO OPEN TENDER

Sealed tenders are invited by Kayah State Mineral Production Company Limited, for the sale Tin, Tungstent, Scheelite mixed concentrates Mawchi mixed ore (84.00) metric ton (Sn-36.64%,WO3-21.12%).

Tender documents are available during office hours 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

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.

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

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 dance/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 genes, traditional medicine)

e. Traditional Craftsman ship (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 deemed 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.

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 Papyrus 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/art 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

a. Oral Traditions and Expressions, including Language as vehicles for Intangible Cultural Heritage, (folk stories/folktales, ancient manuscripts, traditional games)

b. Performing Arts (folk dance/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 genes, traditional medicine)

e. Traditional Craftsman ship (painting, sculpture, traditional food)
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 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.

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

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

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

The third fabulous replay: Phe 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 VPF.

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 announced 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 declared the skepticism 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 Times 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

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

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 in right 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 deeming 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

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

PHOTO: AFP