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THE GLOBAL NEW LIGHT OF MYANMAR

Vol. VII, No. 116, 7th Waning of Second Waso 1382 ME | WWW.GNLM.COM.MM | Monday, 10 August 2020

Over 80 stranded Myanmar nationals in Thailand brought back home by relief flight

SOME 83 Myanmar nationals stranded in Thailand due to suspension of flights amidst COVID-19 were brought back by a relief flight yesterday.

The sixth relief flight of the Myanmar National Airlines carrying Myanmar nationals from Thailand landed Yangon International Airport yesterday evening.

At the airport, officials of the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population provided them with arrangements for 21-day quarantine facility, while officials of the Ministry of Health and Sports and the Yangon Region Government with the medical check ups and necessary arrangements.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is working in line with directives from the National Level Central Committee for Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19 to bring back Myanmar citizens stranded abroad due to the suspension of international flights. To bring back remaining citizens, the MoFA coordinates with Myanmar embassies/consulate offices, and relevant ministries in foreign countries.—MNA

Myanmar citizens arrive at Yangon International Airport by relief flight from Thailand on 9 August. **PHOTO: MNA**

One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar reported on 9 August, total figure reaches 360

MYANMAR'S COVID-19 positive cases reached **360** after **1 new case** was reported on 9 August according to Ministry of Health and Sports. Case **No 360** returned from USA. Out of the **360** confirmed cases, **six** died, **312** have recovered, **308** have been discharged from hospitals and **9** were held under investigation.—MNA

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"People are the key"

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko joins the Global Online Assembly "Rally of Hope" on 9 August 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

Union Minister Thura U Aung Ko participates in 'Rally of Hope'

UNION Minister for Religious Affairs and Culture Thura U Aung Ko, together with Deputy Minister U Kyi Min and officials, participated in Global Online Assembly "Rally of Hope" yesterday.

The virtual assembly was led by the Republic of Korea and organized by Universal Peace Federation-Asia Pacific through International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP) to enhance interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values.

Representatives from the countries of Asia-Pacific Region joined the assembly via video-conferencing.

World leaders and former prime ministers including former Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr Ban Ki-moon and Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen delivered speeches at the online assembly.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Yangon-Cocogyun ferry services expected to be launched in late August

MINISTRY of Transport and Communications has targeted to launch the ferry services between Yangon and Cocogyun in the last week of August, according to the ministry yesterday.

The plan comes after State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's visit to the island on 6 August.

When launch the plan, twice a month ferry service will be conducted in August and September while three times a month service will be in October and November, when the weather is fine, according to the ministry.

Union Minister for Transport and Communications disclosed the plan at the work coordination meeting on implementation of the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's directive on promoting water transport between Yangon and Coco Island, known as Cocogyun, held at the ministry's office in Yangon yesterday.

On her visit to the Cocogyun on 6 August, the State Counsellor suggested to increase the frequency of vessels coming to Cocogyun.

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung, the Myanma Port Authority Managing Director U Ni Aung, the Inland Water Transport Managing Director U Htay Aung, the Department of Marine Administration Director General U Soe Naing, and the Costal Voyage Shipowners Association Chairperson U Nyan Win and other officials attended the meeting.

During the coordination meeting yesterday, the Union Minister for Transport and Communications U Thant Sin Maung, said, "The State Counsellor, on her visit to Cocogyun on 6 August, claimed that the biggest difficulty she noticed when she setting foot on Cocogyun was the difficulty of connecting with the mainland. This was the low frequency of ships coming to the island. That was the reason why she wanted our ministry to look into the matter and take immediate action to resolve the matter so that the frequency of ships coming to the island could be raised." The Union Minister recounted the instruction of the State Counsellor saying that his ministry needs to find out whatever is needed, what could be done and how it should be done.

"She wanted to transform the island into a model township, a remote outpost providing and protecting national security; in a way to designate the Cocogyun as an indispensable place and work for the development and progress of this island as a priority; to look at this in another way, when we study the progress of our country, we can look at the image of Cocogyun and gauge how far our country has progressed."

The Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung reiterated the State Counsellor's suggestion by saying, "She said although the township is a small area, it has many advantages for development if suitable management are performed by taking these opportunities, and people will enjoy progress. If authorities exert cooperative efforts in sectors such as health, education, transportation and electricity supply, this area could see significant development in months or years."

During her visit, the State Counsellor urged the ministry to make efforts for considerable progress in marine transportation between Yangon and the island.

Afterwards, officials from the Myanma Port Authority, the Inland Water Transport, the Department of Marine Administration, and the Coastal Voyage Shipowners Association made detailed explanations and suggestions. —MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Union Minister U Thant Sin Maung addresses the meeting for Yangon-Cocogyun ferry services on 9 August 2020. **PHOTO: MNA**

COVID-19 Call Centre opens daily

In efforts to speed up the prevention, containment and treatment of the COVID-19 disease, the call centre (phone number 2019) is established by four communications operators and the Blue Ocean Company with the coordination of the Medical Research Department of the Health and Sports Ministry and Post and Telecommunications Department from 9 am to 5 pm daily at the Medical Research Department in Yangon.

Over 43 staff from the Medical Research Department and 17 volunteers from the Myanmar Medical Association totally 60 workers have been working at the centre since 8th April.—**MNA**

2020 MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY GENERAL ELECTION

Advance voting process for local voters outside their constituencies in 2020 General Election

- Heads of trainings, schools, hospitals and jails are to contact the sub-election commissions to get documents of Form 15.
- They must return these documents to sub-commission of respective townships by 26 August 2020 after the documents are filled by the voters.
- Sub-election commission of respective townships must send ballot papers and envelopes for advance voting to the trainings, schools, hospitals and jails by 7 October 2020.
- Advance voting must be organized at trainings, schools, hospitals and jails on their appropriate day from 8 October 2020 to 21 October 2020.
- The envelopes containing ballot papers must be sent back to sub-election commission of respective townships by 4 pm on 8 November 2020.

Citizenship scrutiny cards issued in Yangon Region under Thitsa project

THE Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population is speeding up issuing citizenship scrutiny cards across the nation under Thitsa project ahead of the upcoming General Election to guarantee the right to vote.

Yesterday morning, the officials from the Department of Immigration and Population in Mayangon Township in Yangon Region conducted a tour of inspection of the ministry's team issuing the citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible persons in the township at Zayyatu Mingala Hall. The Union Minister for Labour, Immigration and Population U Thein Swe, the Yangon Region Minister for Immigration and Human Resources Daw Moe Moe Su Kyi, and regional MP U Yan Shin visited the location.

They urged the team issuing the cards to work cooperatively in order not to lose the right to vote of those who should be eligible voters.

Then, the Union Minister and other officials presented the citizenship scrutiny cards to the eligible citizens.

Union Minister U Thein Swe inspects the issuing of the citizenship scrutiny cards to eligible persons in Yangon yesterday. **PHOTO: MNA**

Similarly, the Union Minister and his entourage visited the Marga Religious Hall in Ward 12 of South Okkalapa Township in Yangon Region, where the citizenship scrutiny cards were being issued under Thitsa project. Then, they presented citizenship scrutiny cards to the residents.

Afterwards, the Union Minister U Thein Swe explained about Thitsa project issuing citizenship scrutiny cards. He said that his ministry is cooperating with the General Administration Department and electoral sub-commissions in order that the card numbers in the voters lists to be correct. As for the voters who still do not have citizenship scrutiny cards, he explained what must be done in order to protect their right to vote. He also urged the citizens to cooperate with the ministry.

Next, the Yangon Region Minister for Immigration and Human Resources Daw Moe Moe Su Kyi explained the matters related to voters lists and issuing citizenship scrutiny cards in the Yangon Region.

Then, the Union Minister and his entourage inspected the process of issuing the citizenship scrutiny cards in accordance with the COVID-19 preventive measures set by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

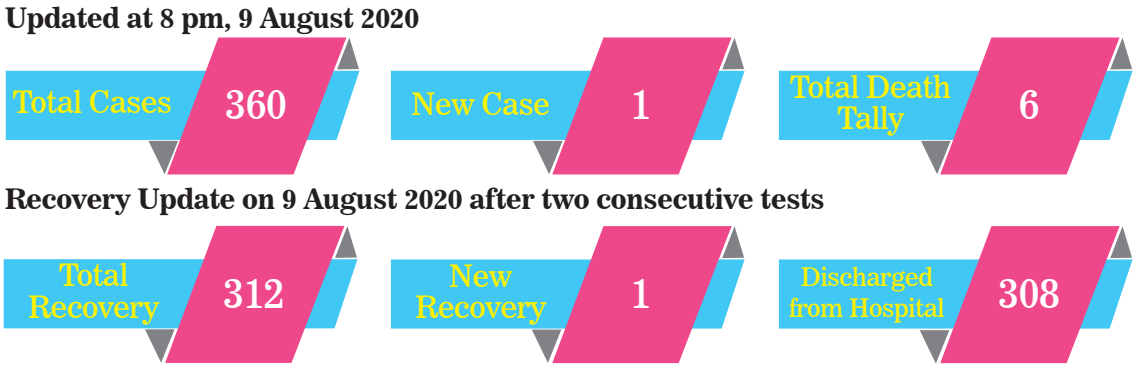
On 9 August, 157 people in Mayangon Township and 120 people in South Okkalapa Township obtained the cards.—MNA

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

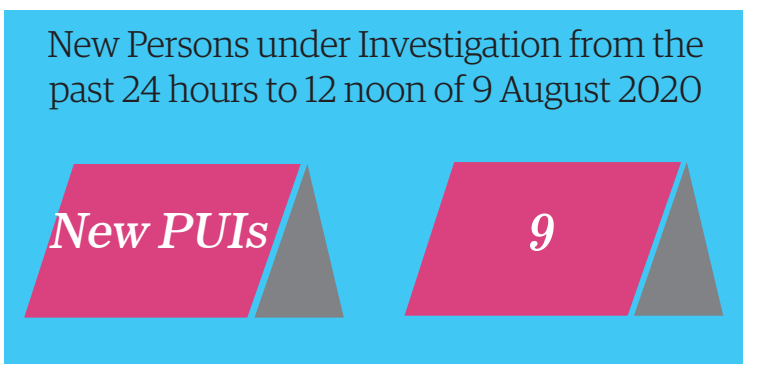
One new case of COVID-19 in Myanmar reported on 9 August, total figure reaches 360

FROM PAGE-1

Updated at 8 pm, 9 August 2020



Recovery Update on 9 August 2020 after two consecutive tests



One more COVID-19 case on 9 August 2020: updated at 8 pm

Case No	Age	Gender	Address	Contact with positive patient	Oversea travel history	Hospital for medical treatment	Lab result	Remark
360	53	Male	Kalay Township, Sagaing Region	No	Yes, USA	Weibergi Specialist Hospital	Positive	Held under quarantine (Mingaladon Township)

Ministry of Health and Sports

Now was not the time to become careless and carefree

It has been learnt from the news that in other countries, people thought that the worse was over but the COVID-19 second wave came in; if possible, Myanmar wants to prevent the complete occurrence of COVID-19 second wave; Myanmar does not wish to see an outbreak.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of prevention as well as treatment, the public should be informed about the things that need to be heeded and why. That was why she wanted health professionals to make people understand these things clearly. Now was not the time to become careless and carefree.

(Excerpt from State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's discussions with senior health officials on 30 June 2020)

Union Commerce Minister meets glazed pot makers in Kyaukmyaung

VICE-Chairman of the Private Sector Development Committee and Union Minister for Commerce Dr Than Myint visited the workplace of "Han Win Saw" advancing glazed business in Nwe Nyein Ward, Kyaukmyaung Town in Shwebo Township, Sagaing Region yesterday.

The Union Minister accompanied by Sagaing Region Immigration and Human Resources Minister U Myo Kyaw Thu and Consumer Affairs Department's Director-General U Myint Lwin held a meeting with ceramic pot makers and locals at the "Han Win Saw" Glazed Business' meeting hall.

Speaking at the meeting, the Union Minister urged ceramic pot makers to try hard together to protect Myanmar's traditional glazed business by improving technologies and expanding markets.

Those who attended the meeting said the use of glazed wares is more suitable for health than the use of fibre and plastic products.

They also asked the ministry to provide trainings for the glazed industry's long-term sustainability that is at risk because of insufficient supply for demand and labour shortage.

They also discussed availability of L.P.G Gas and replacing fire bricks for clay bricks that are needed for quality glazed wares. The Union Minister coordinated over the attendees' reports.

The Union Minister and party met businesspersons at the Kanaung Hall of Shwebo Industrial Zone. At the meeting, iron frame and iron door making business owner U Win Bo discussed the loans given by the government during COVID-19.

The industry's secretary discussed agricultural difficulties caused by lack of water in ThaPhanSeik Dam. He suggested that water in Chindwin and Ayeyawady rivers should be piped to the dam.

Daw Moe Moe Myint from Theelone Village reported the difficulties of tax payment for Farmland Form No.7 name changing. The Union Minister coordinated over the matters.

He also visited the Shwebo Poultry Farming Special Zone and met with local farmers.

The Union Minister accompanied by Sagaing Region Chief Minister visited "Myitta Yeik Women Care Centre and Vocational Institute" and provided cash assistances for the institute.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Union Minister Dr Than Myint meets galzed pot makers in Kyaukmyaung, Sagaing Region on 9 August 2020.
PHOTO: MNA

SWRR Ministry provides aid for flood victims in Magway Region

VICE-Chairman of the National Disaster Management Committee and Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement Dr Win Myat Aye provided assistance for flood victims in Magway and Minbu townships, Magway Region, yesterday.

The Union Minister was accompanied by Magway Region Chief Minister Dr Aung Moe Nyo, SWRR Deputy Minister, Region Social Affairs Minister, Amyotha Hluttaw Representative and Hluttaw representatives, Disaster Management Department's Director-General and officials.

They arrived at Myaynu Kyun Village, paid homage to the village monastery's presiding monk and donated cash.

The Union Minister encouraged the flood victims, and the Amyotha Hluttaw Representative discussed matters related to the flood.

The ministry gave a total of K 24.8 million for 248 damaged houses, K 100,000 for each house, and K 2.0223 million cash assistance for 963 flood victims.

They provided a total of K 6.03 million, K 3,000 for each person, for 201 vulnerable persons including elderly persons, children under five year old, the disabled and pregnant women.

The Union Minister and party encouraged flood victims at a disaster-resilient building in Minbu Township.

They provided K 3.8829 million for 1,849 flood victims and also distributed instant noodle, hand sanitizers and masks.

Speaking at the meeting with flood victims, the Union Minister said it is the ministry's duty to help the people affected by disasters.

He urged the people to take great care because not only natural disasters but also COVID-19 pandemic are occurring.

The ministry is also working with the COVID-19 Economic Relief Plan (CERP) that was drawn up by the government so that all can together overcome the pandemic.—MNA

(Translated by Kyaw Zin Tun)

Union Minister Dr Win Myat Aye hands over the cash aid to flood victims in Magway Region on 9 August 2020.
PHOTO: MNA

Rice export prices drop for two consecutive months

THE prices of rice in export market significantly plummeted in July against the previous two months, as per data of Myanmar Rice Federation (MRF).

The prices have remained flat for two months (May and June) and sharply fell in July. The foreign market purchases our rice as the price is quite cheaper than other Asian countries such as Thailand and Viet Nam, said an official of Bayintnaung commodity depot.

Yet, the prices are higher than those market prices of India and Pakistan, MRF's data showed.

In June, the prices of white rice varieties ranged US$395 to 440 per metric tonne depending on quality. The prices plunged to $375-420 per metric tonne in July.

Workers loading the truck with sacks of rice at Botahtaung Jetty in Yangon. **PHOTO: PHOE KHWAR**

The prices of rice last month move in the ranges of K36,000-51,000 per 108-pound-bag of Pawsan varieties, with a drop of K3,000 per bag compared to the previous two months. Meanwhile, low quality rice fetched 20,500-22,500 in domestic market, showing a decrease of K1,000 per bag as against the prices in May and June, MRF data showed.

It is difficult to ship rice in rainy season. In July, rice prices significantly plunged as against June, said traders from Bayintnaung market.

The volume of rice and broken rice exported between 1 October and 17 July in the 2019-2020 fiscal year has been estimated at over 2.25 million metric tonnes, worth over $678.29 million, according to an announcement from the MRF.

The federation has been accelerating it's effort to meet rice export target of 2.4 million tonnes in the current financial year 2019-2020.

According to the coordination meeting held on 26 June 2020, 150,000 tonnes of rice will be exported each in July and August. And, 100,000 tonnes of rice will be sent to external market in September, totalling rice export quota of 400,000 tonnes.

ASEAN countries constitute 17 per cent of Myanmar's total rice exports. The European Union countries account for over 20.45 per cent of rice exports, while 30.2 per cent of total rice exports in Myanmar goes to African countries.

Myanmar shipped 3.6 million tonnes of rice in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, which was an all-time record in rice exports. The export volume plunged to 2.29 million tonnes, worth $691 million, in the 2018-2019FY. —Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Coffee association expects export market recovery in coming months

MYANMAR'S COFFEE beans exports are dropping as against last year, and Myanmar Coffee Association is expecting a recover of market in the coming months, said an official of the association.

The impacts of coronavirus hurt coffee industry as the lockdown and physical distancing caused a reduction in consumption.

The COVID-19 crisis changed the dynamics of coffee consumption during recent months and roasters, cafe owners and distributors are identifying specific trends in Asian markets that may expedite a recovery to a new normal, according to ASEAN Coffee Federation.

"Myanmar primarily produces Arabica coffee. Specialty coffee fetches as much as US$4,500-10,000 per ton. Myanmar's specialty coffee beans are highly demanded due to their high quality and organic production," said U Myo Aye, chair of the Myanmar Coffee Association.

"Myanmar's coffee has already earned a good reputation. It has penetrated markets in Asia such as Hong Kong and Singapore, European countries, and the US, and it has a good potential in the global market," said an official from the Agriculture Department.

Myanmar's coffee has grabbed a market share in the US, with the support of USAID and WinRock International NGO. Efforts are being made to penetrate markets in Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Canada.

FILE PHOTO

At present, the export of coffee is extremely low as the COVID-19 hit hard the western countries.

In response to the COVID-19 in the coffee sector, innovative trade offer and digital market are required in order to adapt to a new normal, coupled with client-oriented supply.

Moreover, the coffee growers and producers need to increase quality to enter competitive markets. As a result of this, the government backed loan is needed to help the stakeholders survive in the crisis.

There are 40,000 acres of highland coffee plantations and about 10,000 acres under lowland coffee in Myanmar, totaling 50,000 acres. Shan State is the main producer of coffee beans.

Coffee beans are harvested between December and February. They are distributed and exported throughout the year after harvest time. Myanmar yearly exports around 400 tonnes of coffee. In 2019, it shipped about 500 tonnes of coffee to foreign markets. — Ko Khant

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

Agro-exports top $3.3 bln in ten months

MYANMAR exports of agricultural products between 1 October and 31 July in the current financial year 2019-2020 exceeded US$3.3 billion from $2.8 billion in the corresponding period of the 2018-2019FY, according to the trade figures released by the Ministry of Commerce.

During the past ten months, the agro-export figures reflect an increase of $500.5 million against a-year ago period.

In the exports sector, the agriculture industry performed the best along, accounting for 22 per cent of overall exports. The chief items of export in the agricultural sector are rice and broken rice, pulses and beans and maize. Fruits and vegetables, sesame, dried tea leaves, sugar, and other agro products are also shipped to other countries.

Myanmar agro-products are primarily exported to China, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka. However, the export market remains uncertain due to unsteady global demand.

The country requires specific export plans for each agro product, as they are currently exported to external markets based upon supply and demand. Contract farming systems, the involvement of regional and state agriculture departments, exporters, traders, and some grower groups, are required to meet production targets, said an official from the Agriculture Department.

The Commerce Ministry is working to help farmers deal with challenges such as high input costs, procurement of pedigree seeds, high cultivation costs, and erratic weather conditions. — Ko Htet

(Translated by Ei Myat Mon)

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58 inmates from Insein Prison pass matriculation exam

File photo shows teachers giving answer papers to the matriculation students in the Insein Prison. **PHOTO: PE ZAW**

THE matriculation exam results for 2019-2020 academic year were released nationwide yesterday morning.

Eighty-five prisoners from Insein Prison, Yangon, sat for the matriculation exam, and out of which 58 people, or 68.23 per cent, passed it. Of these, 34 students passed it with flying colours.

The prisoners sat for the matriculation exam at No.13 B.E.M.S. (Branch), which is located on the prison premises, in March this year. Twenty-four prisoners achieved one distinction, six achieved two distinctions, three achieved three distinctions, and one achieved four distinctions.

Since the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year, prisoners who are degree graduates and have teaching experiences, teachers from schools in Insein Township, and other volunteer teachers taught the prisoners who sat for the 2019-2020 matriculation exam.

Since 2014, prisoners in Insein Prison have been allowed to sit for matriculation exam. Two prisoners passed the matriculation exam in 2014, seven in 2015, eleven in 2016, nine in 2017, nineteen in 2018, fifty-two in 2019, and 58 this year. So, from 2014 to 2020, a total of 158 prisoners from Insein Prison passed the matriculation exam, and out of these, 70 prisoners passed the exams with flying colours.—Zaw Gyi

(Translated by Maung Maung Swe)

Myanmar nationals return home from China via Lashio

Myanmar returnees from China are making way back home via Lashio by trains. **PHOTO: MNA**

LOCAL authorities in Lashio of northern Shan State helped the returnees back from China through Muse, Laukkai in Kokang Self-administered Zone and Chinshwehaw border town by transporting them to the respective regions by trains starting from 6 May. Among 52 people yesterday, 13 persons are from Sagaing Region, 19 from Magway Region, 13 from Mandalay, one each from Nay Pyi Taw and Rakhine State and five from Ayeyawady Region. A total of 14,420 persons have returned to Myanmar from China through border crossings from 6 May to date. — Nan Thanda Oo (State IPRD)

(Translated by TTN)

Police seizes narcotic drug worth over K200 mln in Loilem

A combined team including police from anti-drug enforcement division searched a motor vehicle driven by Maung Tun accompanied by Tun Shwe, Eu Thet Kyan and Kyaw Soe on Loilem-Taunggyi road near Hotint Vilage, Loilem Township in Shan State on 7 August. Police seized 7.48 km, 28,000 stimulant tablets, K285,000 and four hand phones from them. Police opened file against them with Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Law, according to Myanmar Police Force.—MNA

(Translated by TTN)

Four suspects and seizure drug are seen. **PHOTO: MPF**

Elections are the main pillar for supporting democracy.

Over 80 stranded Myanmar nationals in Thailand brought back home by relief flight

Myanmar citizens arrive at Yangon International Airport by relief flight from Thailand on 9 August 2020. **PHOTO: MNA (NEWS ON PAGE-1)**

568 Myanmar migrant workers return home via Myawady border

Myanmar returnees queuing at No 2 Myawady border bridge on 9 August 2020. **PHOTO: HTEIN LIN AUNG (IPRD)**

A total of 568 Myanmar migrant workers — 351 males and 217 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, and officials helped the returnees with medical tests and other supplies.

A total of 61,955 returnees including 11,680 in May, 25,338 in June and 18,597 in July and 6340 in August have come back home through the border since 1 May.—Htein Lin Aung (IPRD)

(Translated by TTN)

BACK IN THE GAME

Chinese economy's V-shaped recovery becomes more prominent

CHINA'S economy, as shown by multiple mid-year indicators, has ridden out its downturn due to COVID-19 strains and bounced back to growth in the second quarter (Q2). Economists believe that the country's V-shaped recovery is only getting started.

In Q2, China's gross domestic product expanded by 3.2 percent year on year, reversing a 6.8-percent contraction in the previous quarter. China's fiscal revenue marked the first expansion this year by gaining 3.2 percent year on year in June, while the contraction of the retail sector declined markedly.

BACKED BY STIMULATION

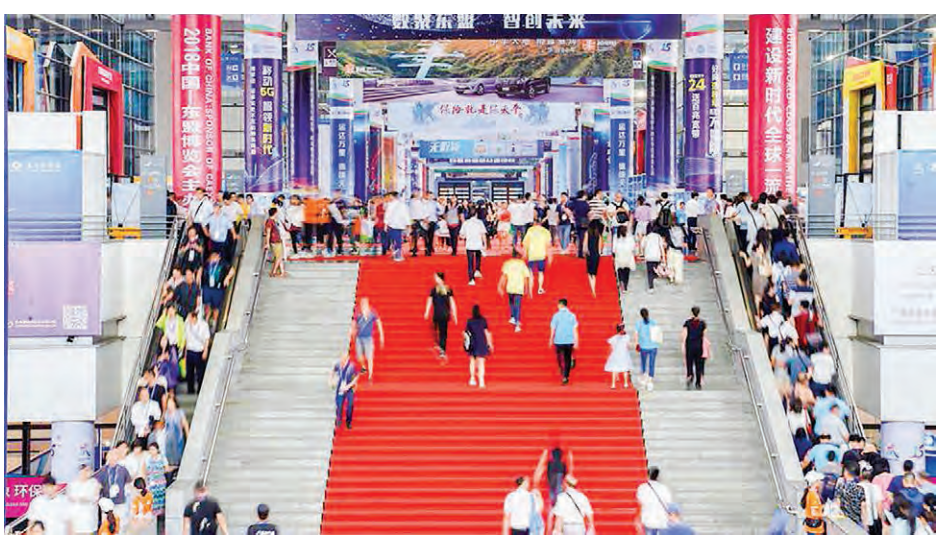
"China's economy has gradually emerged from the slump and returned to the level it was roughly at prior to the outbreak, backed by the stimulation that has delivered burgeoning signs of work resumption, industrial chains and services sector," said Shao Yu, chief economist at Orient Securities.

Latest data showed that the purchasing managers' index (PMI) for China's manufacturing sector rose to 51.1 in July from 50.9 in June, remaining in expansion territory for the fifth month in a row, indicating stronger confidence of market entities.

"The steadily firming recovery points to the effectiveness of China's epidemic prevention and pro-growth policies to boost production and domestic consumption," said Sheng Hai, a macro analyst with China Industrial Securities.

His point was echoed by Steven Zhang, chief economist at Morgan Stanley Huaxin Securities. "China has its institutional advantages that enable a more agile and rapid response to public safety emergencies like COVID-19."

SOURCE: Xinhua



In H1, China's trade with ASEAN went up 5.6 percent year on year to 2.09 trillion yuan (about 301.12 billion U.S. dollars). People visit the 15th China-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Expo in Nanning, capital of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, Sept. 12, 2018. **PHOTO: (XINHUA/CAI YANG)/FILE**

FIFTH BIGGEST CASE

South Africa coronavirus deaths top 10,000: government

MORE than 10,000 people have died from coronavirus in South Africa since the pandemic arrived in the country in March, the health ministry said Saturday.

The continent's most industrialised economy has registered 553,188 infections, more than half of the continental caseload, and the fifth biggest number of COVID-19 cases in the world.

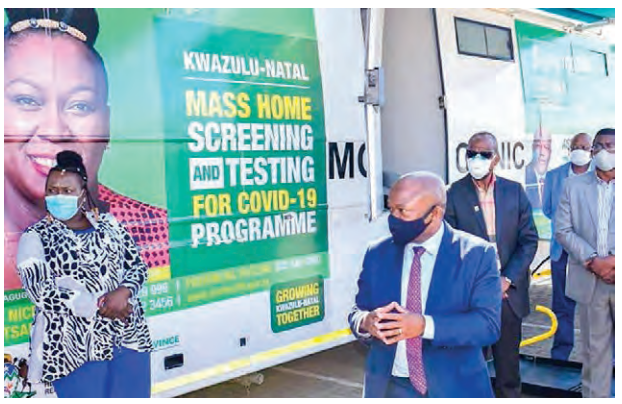
Minister Zweli Mkhize said in his daily update statement that 301 new virus-related deaths had been recorded.

"This means we have breached the 10,000 mark, with 10,210 cumulative deaths now recorded," he said.

More than half of the deaths registered on Saturday were in the southeastern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province.

The National Assembly announced Saturday that the KZN-based veteran opposition politician and lawmaker 91-year-old Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had tested positive for coronavirus, but was asymptomatic.

Buthelezi, led the once-feared Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) that presided over South Africa's deadliest violence ahead of the country's first all-race elections in 1994, until he stepped down last year.



More than half of the deaths registered on Saturday were in the southeastern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, South Africa. **PHOTO COURTESY: KZN HEALTH/FILE**

"The peak is here, the peak is where we are," health minister Mkhize said during an inspection of hospitals in the KZN province on Saturday.

While South Africa is the continent's hardest-hit nation in terms of infections, its mortality rate at around 1,8 percent, is one of the lowest among countries with high numbers of cases.

SOURCE: AFP

Promoting the image of cooperatives in response to COVID-19

WITH the spread of the COVID-19 and its economic and social impacts, the world is facing a time of unprecedented uncertainty. It is a time when things that were previously unimaginable are now a reality.

Despite the difficulties, cooperatives in the world are demonstrating their ability to reorganize themselves, to reinvent themselves and to cooperate.

Cooperatives have developed across the world in helping the socio-economic sector of the people, and cooperatives needs to be used even more so in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing sectors in Myanmar.

Myanmar's agricultural sector is also suffering from the consequences of the Covid-19, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is planning to perform three projects to develop the agricultural cooperatives by spending US$35 million from $200 million of the loan from World Bank for the National Food and Agriculture System Project.

Cooperatives have developed across the world in helping the socio-economic sector of the people, and cooperatives needs to be used even more so in agriculture, livestock and manufacturing sectors in Myanmar.

With 39,929 societies and syndicates, Myanmar cooperative sector has about 4.2 million members and 39,929, providing financial support to the cooperative member farmers, to buy the farming machineries by the hire -purchase system, promoting and assisting the farming services, producing the seed, supporting the input, and promoting the development of the cooperative in order to form the standard cooperative regions.

The task being carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation is an herculean one as the ministry is based on the rural population. So too is the cooperative societies.

Members of the cooperative societies are to make efforts in accordance with the rules and regulations and to find its strength in the support of those very same people and communities amidst COVID- 19 while the Union Government is supporting them to make sure that they have the capability for cooperative work and corporate investment. Only then can they form such farmers' groups.

The need for a community-based economic model is vital in these moments. It is a cooperative model that serves its people and its communities.

The image of cooperatives was tarnished in the past though the essence of the cooperatives system is very noble.

Hence, today is the right time to turn the challenges into opportunities for promoting the image of cooperatives in Myanmar.

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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (9 AUGUST)

On International Day, UN chief spotlights indigenous peoples' resilience in face of COVID-19 pandemic

Inclusion and participation of the world's 476 million indigenous peoples must be ensured in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic and on the road ahead towards recovery, UN Secretary-General António Guterres has underscored.

MARKING the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Mr. Guterres drew attention to the "devastating" impact of the pandemic on indigenous peoples around the world.

"Throughout history, indigenous peoples have been decimated by diseases brought from elsewhere, to which they had no immunity," said the Secretary-General.

While indigenous peoples already faced deep-rooted inequalities, stigmatization and discrimination prior to the current pandemic, inadequate access to healthcare, clean water and sanitation increases their vulnerability, he added.

That said, indigenous peoples' traditional practices and knowledge also offer solutions that can be replicated elsewhere.

Indigenous communities in Myanmar have long been the guardians of the natural environment in the southeast Asian country. Workers dry coffee beans under the sun in Ywangan Township, Taunggyi District, Shan State, Myanmar. **FILE PHOTO**

For instance, the Karen people of Thailand revived their ancient ritual of "Kroh Yee" – or village closure – to fight the pandemic. Other Asian countries and in Latin America applied similar strategies, with communities closing off entry to their areas.

Indigenous peoples with extraordinary resilience

In his message the UN chief also highlighted the extraordinary resilience shown by indigenous peoples in the face of overwhelming challenges.

Many have lost their jobs in traditional occupations, the informal sector or subsistence economies. Indigenous women – often the main providers of food and nutritious for their families – have been particularly impacted with closure of markets for handicrafts, produce and other goods, as have indigenous children, who have lost out on education due to lack of access to virtual learning opportunities.

In addition, indigenous people have been victims of threats and violence, and many have lost their lives, amid increasing encroachment on indigenous peoples' territories by illegal miners and loggers due to lapsed enforcement of environmental protections during the crisis.

"In the face of such threats, indigenous peoples have demonstrated extraordinary resilience," declared Mr. Guterres in the message, urging countries to marshal the resources to respond to their needs, honour their contributions and respect their inalienable rights.

Indigenous peoples must be consulted in all efforts to build back stronger and recover better, he added, noting that from the outset of the global pandemic, UN agencies have been working to uphold indigenous peoples' rights.

"The UN system remains committed to realizing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and to bolstering their resilience," he concluded.

The International Day

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is commemorated annually on 9 August in recognition of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, held in Geneva in 1982.

This year, the Day's theme focuses the spotlight on COVID-19 and indigenous peoples' resilience, and several events – mostly virtual – will be organized, bringing together indigenous peoples' organizations, UN agencies, UN Member States, civil society and other key stakeholders.

SOURCE: UN NEWS

■ ■ ■

ASEAN: A MARKET OF NEARLY 700 MILLION PEOPLE

Supply chain reset in a post-COVID ASEAN

THE COVID-19 pandemic which is expected to be prolonged and drawn out at least until a vaccine is readily available, has rekindled the call for ASEAN, a market of nearly 700 million people and growing middle class, to further forge and foster regional integration.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has also been a catalyst and impetus in exposing the critical need for business and commerce to further digitalise and explore usage of new technologies.

The one geo-economic factor that will blend these two together – regional integration and digitalisation – is supply chain reconfiguration (SCR).

SCR can simply be defined as the rearrangement of supply chain structures to reflect current exigencies such as disruptions and shocks. When the supply chain adapts and adopts digitalisation and new technologies, connectivity will not only resume but become more resilient.

This is nowhere better illustrated than in the increasing substitution of physically integrated supply chain processes by physically fragmented ones as highlighted by Jamari Mohtar at independent think-tank, EMIR Research, in his article, "Tackling MCO's economic paradox and its aftermath."

Towards deeper regionalization

SCR, therefore, will be a pivotal driver in the momentum towards closer and deeper regionalization amidst the expected-to-be prolonged COVID-19 crisis.

Towards that end, even as SCR is tapped to promote ever-closer regionalisation, it's also dependent on the role played by ASEAN member states in enhancing and boosting connectivity and supply chains.

In calling for regionalisation, member states could set up a common supply chain fund, perhaps in the form of an ASEAN "Business Infrastructure Bank". Funds would be pooled from member-states that will be proportionately reflected in the shares held as well as financing support from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and even the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

The fund or bank will provide financing to both governments and the private sector to develop and promote SCR and enhanced trade connectivity in the region and beyond. This includes digital adaptation and adoption as means to promote digital convergence and supply chain confluence as exemplified, for example, by e-commerce.

There is also the need for a common protocol that will obviate problems arising from supply chain disruptions, a point made by Hanim Hamzah, Senior Fellow of the CIMB ASEAN Research Institute (CARI). This common protocol should encompass all aspects in supply chain management (SCM) – legal, technical, digital and financial. By the same token, it should also reflect SCR and its building-blocks for future developments.

For example, the common protocol should make use of distributed ledger technology or otherwise popularly known as blockchain to enhance regional participation in the supply chain and thereby boost regional integration.

A 2017 McKinsey report titled, "Blockchain technology for supply chains – A must or a maybe?" outlines three benefits to be had from a SCR that's operationalised via blockchain, namely:

1. Replacing slow, manual processes
2. Strengthening traceability; and
3. Reducing supply-chain IT transaction costs

As such, SCR will allow ASEAN member states to enjoy efficiency gains as well as reduced costs over time with blockchain playing a role as part of the digital economies of scale.

In turn, this will contribute towards greater regionalisation as ASEAN member states are placed on a more level playing field, so to speak, in terms of digital adoption and adaptation leading to enhanced supply chain connectivity.

New Technologies

Following on from digitalisation, SCR can also take the shape of new technologies that introduce the logistics of the future – looking forward and ahead.

People wearing masks shop for fresh food at a market in Manila on 6 August, 2020. **(AFP PHOTO)**

For example, an integrated and multi-modal network of distribution channels revolving around underground tunnel technology as the centrepiece in the supply chain system and operationalised by digitalisation could partly lead the way in SCR.

Underground or subterranean tunnels, including undersea tunnels, would allow for seamless and uninterrupted supply chain activities – that are also resilient against outbreaks or pandemic such as the COVID-19 pandemic where imposition of partial lockdowns and movement restrictions also affect production and distribution.

The mushrooming of e-commerce as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak will lead to greater usage and competition for urban traffic space within domestic borders as shown in studies on urban logistics systems.

And uncertainties over the "expiry date" of COVID-19 coupled with whether the pandemic can be totally controlled in the form of the imminence of a "second" or "third" wave cutting across borders makes the case for a new logistics all the more compelling.

SOURCE: THE ASEAN POST

Myanmar Daily Weather Report

(Issued at 7:00 pm Sunday 9 August 2020)

BAY INFERENCE: According to the observations at (18:30) hrs MST today, the low pressure area over Northwest Bay of Bengal off north Odisha-Gangetic West Bengal coasts still persists. Monsoon is strong over the Andaman Sea and South Bay and moderate elsewhere over the Bay of Bengal.

FORECAST VALID UNTIL NOON OF THE 10 August 2020: Rain or thundershowers will be isolated in Lower Sagaing, Mandalay and Magway regions, scattered in Nay Pyi Taw, fairly widespread in Upper Sagaing, Yangon and Ayeyawady regions, Northern Shan and Kayah states and widespread in the remaining regions and states with likelihood of isolated heavy falls in Upper Sagaing and Taninthayi regions and Kachin State. Degree of certainty is (100%).

STATE OF THE SEA: Squalls with moderate to rough seas are likely at times off and along Myanmar Coasts. Surface wind speed in squalls may reach (30-35)mph. Wave height will be about (6 – 9) feet off and along Myanmar Coasts.

OUTLOOK FOR SUBSEQUENT TWO DAYS: Moderate monsoon.

FORECAST FOR NAY PYI TAW AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR YANGON AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2020: Isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (100%).

FORECAST FOR MANDALAY AND NEIGHBOURING AREA FOR 10 August 2020: Likelihood of isolated rain or thundershowers. Degree of certainty is (60%).

Flood Bulletin

(Issued at: 12:00 hrs MST on 9-8-2020)

Flood condition of Ngawun River

According to the (11:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ngawun River at Ngathaingchaung has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (2) days.

According to the (11:30) hrs MST observation today, the water level of Ngawun River at Thabaung has exceeded by about (½) foot above its danger level. It may fall below its danger level during the next (3) days.

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SUNDAY POLLS

Belarus presidential challenger demands 'honest election'

Presidential candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya casts her ballot in Minsk. **PHOTO: AFP**

THE main opposition candidate challenging Belarusian strongman Alexander Lukashenko demanded a fair election as she cast her ballot in the presidential poll on Sunday.

"I really want the election to be honest, because if the authorities have nothing to fear, if all the people are for Alexander Grigoryevich (Lukashenko), then we will agree with that," Svetlana Tikhanovskaya said as she cast her ballot in the capital Minsk.

The 37-year-old English teacher and translator's campaign has emerged as the biggest challenge in years to Lukashenko, who has ruled the ex-Soviet country of 9.5 million since 1994.

She stood for election after authorities barred her husband, popular blogger Sergei Tikhanovsky, from running and then jailed him.

Tikhanovskaya's campaign office said Sunday that one of her key allies, Veronika Tsepkalo, had left the country for Russia out of concern for her safety.

Tsepkalo, whose ex-diplomat husband Valery Tsepkalo was barred from standing in the election, had backed Tikhanovskaya in the campaign and her husband had already fled to Moscow fearing arrest.

"We have been in contact with Veronika Tsepkalo. She says she is in Moscow and will vote there," the press service for the campaign said.

"We respect Veronika's decision, the situation is not easy. Everyone has the right to assess their personal risks on their own."

Tsepkalo and Maria Kolesnikova, campaign chief of ex-banker Viktor Babaryko who was also dropped from the polls and is in jail, joined forces with Tikhanovskaya to mount a united campaign against Lukashenko.

Photographs of the three women standing together and making their signature gestures -- Tikhanovskaya's punched fist, Kolesnikova's fingers in a heart shape and Tsepkalo's victory sign -- have become an emblem of the opposition.

SOURCE: AFP

THE CONTENTIOUS RALLY

Hundreds protest in Bangkok after activist arrests

A flashmob of hundreds took to Bangkok's streets Saturday to protest against the arrest of two pro-democracy activists -- the latest outburst of anger in a movement increasingly vocal in its demand for reforms in Thailand.

The kingdom has seen near-daily rallies in recent weeks with mainly young protesters denouncing the government of former military leader Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha.Two protest leaders were arrested Friday evening on eight charges, including sedition and breaking coronavirus rules about gatherings at a rally held at Bangkok's Democracy Monument on July 18.

Human rights lawyer Anon Numpa, 35, and activist Panupong Jadnok, 24, were released on bail Saturday afternoon, on condition they would not repeat the alleged offences. On his release outside the city's criminal court, Anon said he would abide by the terms.

SOURCE: AFP

KICKED OUT ON THE STREET

Egypt highway uproots graves, homes in 'City of Dead'

Egyptian mother-of-three Menna said she was caught off guard when a bulldozer clearing space for a controversial highway flattened much of a mausoleum that doubled as her home in a sprawling cemetery.

"The earth mover suddenly hit the wall and we found ourselves throwing our things in a panic" outside, she told AFP.

"They kicked us out on the street," she said, surrounded by rubble and dust in the UNESCO-listed world heritage site.

Menna's parents and grandparents had made their home among the graves of the City of the Dead, the oldest necropolis in the Muslim world.

For those unable to afford prohibitively high rents in Egypt's capital, the burial chambers provide shelter for thousands like her.

Many built extensions to the original mausoleums, eking out a largely tranquil, if bizarre, existence side-by-side with dead sultans, singers and saints in the sprawling east Cairo cemetery.

But Menna said her peace -- and that of the dead -- was shattered by the arrival of workmen.

"It was awful. We moved the dead on straw mats," she said.

She and her husband shifted several bodies, including the remains of her father, to a segment of her home still intact.

For those unable to afford prohibitively high rents in Cairo, the burial chambers provide shelter to eke out a largely tranquil, if bizarre, existence side-by-side with dead sultans, singers and saints. **PHOTO: AFP**

Menna is now living with neighbours in part of the cemetery that is not in the demolition area.—AFP

DEATH THREATS

Journalists in southern Mexico 'live in terror' of gangs' violence

MEXICAN journalist Julio Cesar Zubillaga shudders when his young daughter asks him why "they" want to kill him.

He spoke up after a fellow reporter's murder and quickly felt the consequences: death threats and a gun attack on the office where his paper is printed.

His experience highlights southern Mexico's status as among the most dangerous regions in a country that is one of the most dangerous in the world for journalists.

Zubillaga helped prepare the corpse of Pablo Morrugares, a journalist with digital newspaper PM Noticias, after gunmen killed both him and the policeman guarding him in a restaurant in Iguala in southern Guerrero state. Zubillaga, the editor of Iguala's La Tarde newspaper, issued a public plea for justice for the 48-year-old reporter, who had survived a 2016 attack.

"It was a brutal assassination. I saw how Pablo looked. I had to dress him for those who wanted to come and see him off, but fewer than four colleagues came. Everyone is afraid. We live in terror," he told AFP. The following day Zubillaga received threats on social media, and on Tuesday gunmen opened fire on the offices of the Diario de Iguala, where his newspaper is printed.

SOURCE: AFP

Singapore marks 55th independence anniv. with smaller parade

SINGAPORE — Singapore marked the 55th anniversary of its independence on Sunday with scaled-down celebrations and dire warnings of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

With the number of virus infections in the city-state breaching the 55,000 mark, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong warned in his National Day message that "the crisis is far from over," and that business closures, retrenchments and unemployment are "all likely to go up in the coming months."

The premier called for Singaporeans to be "resilient" in the face of the severe economic downturn, adding that it would likely take a year or two before a vaccine is made widely available and the threat of the virus is "blunted."

Singapore marked the 55th anniversary of its independence on Sunday with scaled-down celebrations and dire warnings of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. **PHOTO COURTESY: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE**

The ceremonial parade to mark the country's separation from Malaysia in 1965 was considerably downsized with only about 200 personnel from the military and police taking part. The number of spectators was limited to about 150 instead of thousands as in the past. —Kyodo ■

New Zealand's Ardern kicks off election campaign after taming virus

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern attends the launch of the Labour Party's election campaign in Auckland on Saturday. **PHOTO: MICHAEL BRADLEY/AFP**

WELLINGTON — New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern kicked off her Labour Party's election campaign Saturday riding high in the opinion polls after a successful response to the coronavirus outbreak.

Ardern's popularity as preferred prime minister — often referred to as "Jacindamania" — topped 60 percent in the latest surveys following her leadership through the Christchurch mosque attacks, the White Island volcanic eruption and the pandemic.

Before the virus forced New Zealand to seal its borders, the polls had pointed to a cliffhanger election on September 19, but support swung sharply towards the centre-left Labour Party as the country eliminated community transmission in a matter on months.

In a country of five million people, New Zealand has had only 22 COVID-19 deaths and it has been 99 days since the last recorded case of infection from an unknown source.

"When people ask, is this a COVID election, my answer is yes, it is," the charismatic 40-year-old said as she launched the campaign with a NZ$311 million (US$205 million) pledge to boost jobs.

"Businesses large and small are crucial to our economic recovery." Labour is the senior partner in a three-party coalition government but if it can maintain the support shown in recent opinion polls, where it has consistently been above 50 percent, it could govern alone after the election. —AFP ■

Furious Lebanese vow new protests over deadly mega-blast

BEIRUT — Lebanese protesters enraged by official negligence blamed for Beirut's enormous and deadly explosion vowed Sunday to rally again after a night of street clashes in which they stormed several ministries.

"Prepare the gallows because our anger doesn't end in one day," warned one message circulating on social media in response to Tuesday's earthquake-strength blast of a huge pile of industrial chemicals.

While the exact circumstances that led to the blast are not yet known, protesters say it could not have happened without the kind of corruption and incompetence that has come to define Lebanon's hereditary ruling class.

The protest camp renewed its demand that drove a first wave of anti-government protests last year for a wholesale removal of Lebanon's leadership, but this time anger has turned into full-blown rage. The calls for renewed protests came as French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris oversaw a UN-backed virtual donors conference to raise aid for Lebanon, a country already mired in a painful economic crisis.—AFP ■

The blast, whose mushroom cloud reminded many of an atomic bomb, left a 43-metre (141 foot) deep crater at Beirut's port, said a security official citing French experts working in the disaster area. **PHOTO: AFP**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Afghan peace talks near after Taliban prisoner release approved

KABUL — The Afghan government and the Taliban are "on the verge of peace talks" after thousands of prominent Afghans approved the release of about 400 contentious militant prisoners, the head of Kabul's peace council said Sunday.

The prisoners' fate has been a crucial hurdle in launching peace talks between the two warring sides, which had committed to completing a prisoner exchange before negotiations can start.

The resolution was passed at the end of a three-day "loya jirga" -- a traditional Afghan meeting of tribal elders and other stakeholders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues.

"In order to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public, the jirga approves the release of 400 prisoners as demanded by the Taliban," jirga member Atefa Tayeb announced.—AFP ■

Nagasaki marks 75 years since atomic bombing

NAGASAKI — The Japanese city of Nagasaki on Sunday commemorated the 75th anniversary of its destruction by a US atomic bomb, with its mayor and the head of the United Nations warning against a nuclear arms race.

Nagasaki was flattened in an atomic inferno three days after Hiroshima -- twin nuclear attacks that rang in the nuclear age and gave Japan the bleak distinction of being the only country to be struck by atomic weapons.

Survivors, their relatives and a handful of foreign dignitaries attended a remembrance ceremony in Nagasaki where they called for world peace.

Participants offered a silent prayer at 11:02 am (0202 GMT), the time the second and last nuclear weapon used in wartime was dropped over the city.—AFP ■

Trump signs orders extending economic relief for Americans

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Saturday signed executive actions extending financial relief to Americans hit by the coronavirus pandemic as polls showed a large majority of voters unhappy with his handling of the crisis.

The four measures marked a presidential show of strength after Trump's Republican party and White House team failed to agree with opposition Democrats in Congress on a new stimulus package aimed at stopping vulnerable Americans from falling through the cracks.

"We've had it and we're going to save American jobs and provide relief to the American workers," Trump said at a press conference in his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, where he was spending the weekend.

President Donald Trump signs executive actions extending coronavirus economic relief during a news conference at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, on August 8, 2020. **PHOTO: AFP**

With double digit unemployment, disruption to businesses from social distancing rules, and persistent coronavirus spread, many Americans had been relying on relief measures approved earlier by Congress, but which mostly expired in July.—AFP ■

Global gold-backed ETFs add 166 tonnes in July: WGC

BEIJING — Global gold-backed exchange-traded funds (ETFs) added 166 tonnes in July, bringing global holdings to a new all-time high of 3,785 tonnes in the first seven months of the year, data from the World Gold Council (WGC) showed.

Gold is widely viewed as insurance against accelerating price rises. Since the beginning of this year, concerns over the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have driven safe-haven flows into gold investment products, most notably gold ETFs. **PHOTO: XINHUA**

Gold is widely viewed as insurance against accelerating price rises. Since the beginning of this year, concerns over the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have driven safe-haven flows into gold investment products, most notably gold ETFs.

According to the WGC, by the end of July, global gold ETFs have seen net inflows for eight consecutive months. This brought year-to-date net inflows of gold ETFs to around 899 tonnes, surpassing the previous record annual gain of 646 tonnes set in 2009.

Gold ETFs listed in North America saw an inflow of 118 tonnes in July, accounting for over 70 percent of the monthly global net inflows, while gold ETFs listed in Europe, Asia and other regions increased by 40 tonnes, 4.9 tonnes and 3.4 tonnes, respectively, the WGC data showed. — Xinhua ■

Algeria economy rocked by one-two punch

ALGIERS — Currency depreciation, inflation, negative growth, businesses closed: Algeria's economy has been battered by the one-two punch of the coronavirus crisis and tumbling oil revenues.

And unless remedial action is taken on a massive scale, a slide into foreign debt will become inevitable, economists warn.

The National Office of Statistics (ONS) has reported a 3.9 percent fall in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter alone, with unemployment nearing 15 percent -- "alarming" figures, according to Mansour Kedidir, associate professor at the Higher School of Economics in Oran.

Excluding the energy sector, GDP fell by 1.5 percent year-on-year in the 1st quarter, against an increase of 3.6 percent last year compared to Q1 2018.

With confinement measures in place since March 19 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, sectors such as services and freight have come to a virtual standstill.

The construction sector, a major provider of jobs, has been paralysed for months.

Finance Minister Aymen Benabderahmane estimates the losses of state-owned enterprises at nearly one billion euros ($1.17 billion).

Private sector losses have yet to be assessed, but many closed businesses, including restaurants, cafes and travel agencies, risk bankruptcy. — AFP ■

Despite agreement, China purchase of US agriculture lags

WASHINGTON — Seven months after the United States and China signed a preliminary agreement to temper their trade war, Beijing's purchases of US agricultural goods have yet to reach the deal's target.

As President Donald Trump readies for a tough reelection battle in November, US media reported the two sides are set to meet beginning August 15 to discuss the deal, which calls for China to sharply increase buying American goods and services this year and next.

But according to data compiled by the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE), Chinese agricultural purchases at the end of June were far from where they should be at this point in the year.

They had reached only 39 percent of their semi-annual target, according to US figures, or 48 percent, based on Chinese figures. "If we get back to what the level of trade was in 2017, we'll be lucky," said Chad Bown, a PIIE senior fellow who authored the study, referring to the year before the trade war began.

Purchases pick up

Under the deal's terms, China agreed to increase agricultural imports $32 billion over the next two years from 2017 levels. Chinese orders for corn and soybeans have increased since mid-July, with Beijing buying just over three million tons of American oilseeds between July 14 and August 7, according to US Department of Agriculture data.—AFP ■

CLAIMS DAY NOTICE

M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1032 W/E)

Consignees of cargo carried on **M.V ALS SUMIRE VOY. NO. (1032 W/E)** are hereby notified that the vessel will be arriving on **10-8-2020** and cargo will be discharged into the premises of **TMIT/MIP** where it will lie at the consignee's risk and expenses and subject to the byelaws and conditions of the Port of Yangon.

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

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

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Towards Kyaikmaraw

By Maung Tha (Archaeology)

I remembered a writing pad I preferred with a cover illustrated with thriving toddy palm plants in a row on both shoulders of the road leading to Kyaikmaraw used in my childhood when the automobile I rode entered Kyaikmaraw along that road.

Whenever I arrived in Kyaikmaraw on duty, I pleasantly passed the road flanked by toddy palm plants.

Kyaikmaraw

Kyaikmaraw of Mon State is 15 miles southeast of Mawlamyine, on Attaran River. Kyaikmaraw in Mon language means famous pagoda in Myanmar language, according to Myanmar Encyclopaedia. The town on 516.04 square miles of land is located between 16·07' and 16·34' north latitude and 97·39' and 97·50' east longitude. The township is formed with two wards and 44 village-tracts.

Dawna mountain range is stretching in the east of the township and Taungnyo mountain range in the west. Rubber and toddy palm plants scatter in farmlands and horticultural farms. The majority of people are Mon ethnics who grow durain, pomelo and rambutan plants which give satisfaction to consumers.

Kyaikmaraw Township sharing border with Kawkareik Township in the east, Mudon Township in the west, Kyain-seikkyi Township in the south and Mawlamyine and Hpa-an townships in the north is 15 feet higher than the sea level. Travellers can go to Kyaikmaraw from Mawlamyine, Hpa-an and Kyain-seikkyi through waterway. Khayon Cave in Letpan Village in Kyaikmaraw Township is under conservation of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Culture.

Kyaik in Mon language means pagoda in Myanmar language. There are three townships with letter of Kyaik in Myanmar. Kyaiklat Township is located in Ayeyawady Region and Kyaikmaraw and Kyaikto townships in Mon State. Towns and villages with start of Kyaik take positions in Mon Stte and Ayeyawady and Bago regions. The pagodas with the title of Kyaik in start such as Kyaikhtiyoe, Kyaikthallan, Kyaikhtihsaung and Kyaikkhauk can be seen in various sites.

Empress Shin Saw Pu and Hsutaungpyae Pagoda

We visited Hsutaungpyae Pagoda in Kyaikmaraw, on the opposite of Myoma market in downtown of the town. The archway was 18 feet high and 50 feet wide. We saw a large gong on which Empress Shin Saw Pu's gong, Kyaikmaraw was expressed. Many people assumed such gong was donated by Empress Shin Saw Pu in renovating the pagoda but no evidence was found. The bronze gong bore inscriptions, saying that the gong was donated by Mytita Linmyaing Latkhattaung Sayadaw of Myawady to the Sayadaw of Hsutaungpyae Phayagyi Monastery in Kyaukmaraw.

Buddha Image at Kyaikmaraw Hsutaungpyae Pagoda.

Ttoddy palm plants.

A stone plaque on the left of entrance to the precinct of pagoda mentioned meritorious deeds of Empress Shin Saw Pu at Kyaikmaraw Pagoda, praying for contributors to her meritorious deeds and curse for destroying the deeds in Mon language but historical evidences of the pagoda.

Shin Saw Pu was born of Hanthawady King Razadiriz and queen Thuddhamaya in 755 Myanmar era. She took the title of Hsinbyushin Byeenya Htaw at 59 (1452 AD) and became empress of Hanthawady. She united Pathein, Mottama and Hanthawady of Yamanya Division.

Empress Shin Saw Pu arrived in Kyaikmaraw in 817 ME and ordered architects to renovate the Buddha image of Kyaikmaraw Pagoda. As of renovation, the empress took Nine Sabbaths for nine days. A total of 108 members of the Sangha surrounded the pagoda for nine rounds to recite stone inscription in Mon language she wrote. Nine Buddha images decorated nine gems were enshrined at the pagoda. The empress held the Buddha Pujaniya festival for nine days.

The history of the pagoda mentioned that the empress prayed for strengthening her royal palace after renovating

the Buddha image on full moon day of Thadingyut in 817 ME. Her praying achieved successfully and the pagoda was named Hsutaungpyae.

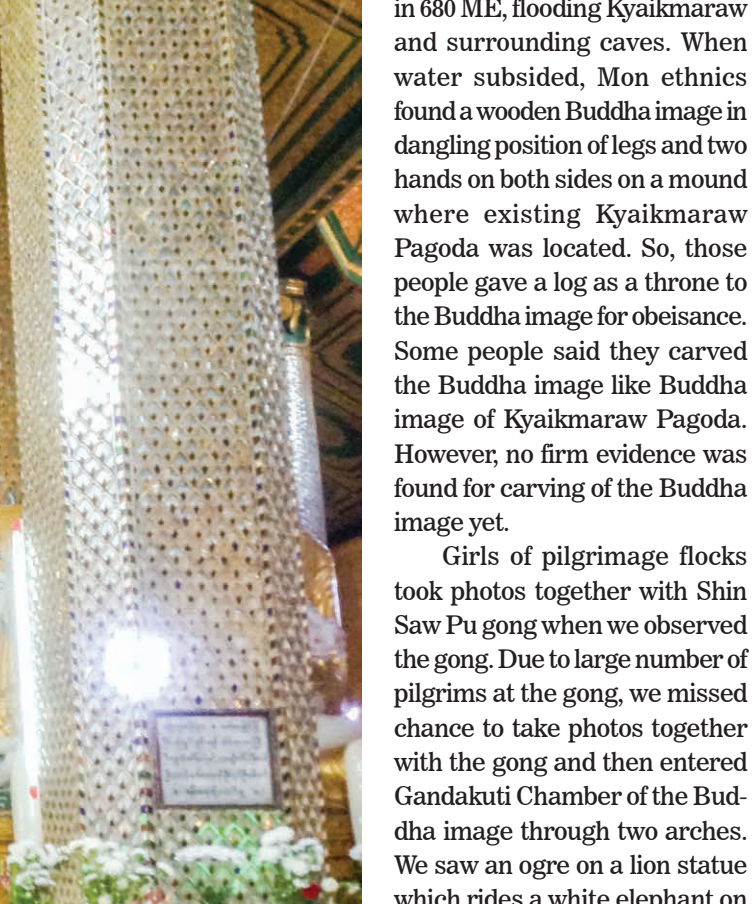
People in successive eras said Attaran River overflowed in 680 ME, flooding Kyaikmaraw and surrounding caves. When water subsided, Mon ethnics found a wooden Buddha image in dangling position of legs and two hands on both sides on a mound where existing Kyaikmaraw Pagoda was located. So, those people gave a log as a throne to the Buddha image for obeisance. Some people said they carved the Buddha image like Buddha image of Kyaikmaraw Pagoda. However, no firm evidence was found for carving of the Buddha image yet.

Girls of pilgrimage flocks took photos together with Shin Saw Pu gong when we observed the gong. Due to large number of pilgrims at the gong, we missed chance to take photos together with the gong and then entered Gandakuti Chamber of the Buddha image through two arches. We saw an ogre on a lion statue which rides a white elephant on the right side of the first archway. A king of celestial beings was seen on the right side of the second archway and Brahma on the left side.

Gandakuti Chamber where Hsutaungpyae Buddha image is being kept is 120 feet long, 66 feet wide and 75 feet high. It is a brick chamber with five tiers of roof. An umbrella was hoisted atop the tiered roof. The Buddha image is 24 feet high. The height between base of the sitting position and the head was 16 feet and the height between feet and knees, eight feet. The diameter of the Buddha image is eight feet.

The eyes of the image was made of tourmaline, and the head above forehead, Russian diamond rounded by pieces of real diamond, the single hair which grows between Buddha's eyebrows, a piece of ruby rounded by pieces of diamond and the forehead, coloured glass balls.

The Hsutaungpyaw Buddha image facing the eastward was surrounded by 50 small Buddha image. A total of 43 more Buddha images were kept on the central terrace. That is why the pagoda was built with 94 Buddha image including Hsutaungpyae Buddha image. The Hsutaungpyae Buddha image was flanked by two great Savaka namely Shin Sariputtara and Shin Moggalan before Shin Ananda in posture of paying homage to the Lord Buddha. The backdrop of the image was depicted with plots of Vidhura Jataka. The backdrop and images were made in the time of Sayadaw U Ketumala.



Art works.

A gong being seen in the compound of Kyaikmaraw Hsutaungpyae Pagoda. Many people assumed such gong was donated by Empress Shin Saw Pu in renovating the pagoda but no evidence was found.

The archway of Kyaikmaraw Hsutaungpyae Pagoda.

The Sayadaw renovated the prayer hall in 1261 ME and substituted the old wooden posts with new brick posts. The walls of the prayer hall were decorated with mosaic works. The original wooden Buddha image was enveloped by brick image.

The Asana (feet) posture of the Buddha was the most significant. The Buddha's legs were carved down from the throne. Tu Mudra of hands was also significant on the throne. The body posture of the image was magnificent but no one knew the purpose of carving.

As people across the nation pay visits to Kyaikmaraw Pagoda, a wide Dhammayon was built west of the pagoda for stay of pilgrims. The old Dhammayon was rebuilt as a new one with 134 feet in length and 68 feet in width.

The lake for Shin Upagutta, a 45 feet high ancient Hsutaungpyae Ceti, 27 feet high Pyilone Chantha Pagoda and Rahanta ordination hall with 27 feet in length, 27 feet in width and 15 feet in height were built in the precinct of the pagoda.

A brick Pitakat chamber was seen in north of the ordination hall and south of the pagoda. I viewed round Tri Pitakat treatises, Buddhist literature and books in Mon languages in the chamber.

We paid homage to Kyaikmaraw Pagoda for its significant posture of legs. While paying homage to the pagoda, I praised for a great meritorious deed performed by Mon empress Shin Saw Pu last 560 years and prayed for perpetual existence of ancient Kyaikmaraw Buddha image.

(Translated by Than Tun Aung)

References:

Regional Facts about Kyaikmaraw Township

History of Kyaikmaraw Hsutaungpyae Pagoda

Footballers, coaches undergo quarantine to restart MNL

All Myanmar National League (MNL) footballers and coaches, preparing to restart 2020 MPT MNL, are undergoing quarantine at the Myanmar National Football Team's apartments of Myanmar Football Federation in Yangon starting on 9 August.

COVID-19 tests for the players will be conducted today in line with Standard Operating Procedure set up by the Ministry of Health and Sports, according to Shan United's statement yesterday.

Myanmar National League matches will resume on 22 August 2020 if all the players and coaches pass the COVID-19 test. The matches will be held under the government's permission that will be obtained depending on the football squads' condition this month, according to the Myanmar National League coordination meeting on 6 August.

All the Myanmar National League matches were played behind closed doors while broadcasting was only available for the football fans on 1 March.

On 24 March, Myanmar National League leading committee postponed all the matches after first report of COVID-19 cases in Myanmar.—Lynn Thit (Tgi)

Yangon United players seen in their regular training session on 7 August as Myanmar National League will restart in the near future. **PHOTO: YUFC**

Man Utd, Inter favourites for Europa League in unique German finale

Harry Maguire and Manchester United take on FC Copenhagen in the Europa League quarter-finals next week. **PHOTO: AFP/FILE**

PARIS — Manchester United, Inter Milan and Sevilla headline a quintet of former champions travelling to Germany for a remodelled eight-team straight knockout tournament that will crown the winner of a Europa League campaign heavily disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic.

All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season's competition will be played behind closed doors as one-off ties across four venues — Cologne, Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Gelsenkirchen — following a five-month interruption.

While a Champions League berth still awaits the victor of the final in Cologne on August 21, much has changed since the COVID-19 outbreak that brought European football to a standstill in March.

"There are rules and regulations on the bubble that's going to travel. We've got to stick together, stay together in and around the hotel and the training ground," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer said of the strict health protocols clubs must respect.

Players and staff will undergo virus testing before departing for Germany and again on the eve of a match once arriving, a process repeated for each subsequent game in the final tournament.

UEFA has advised teams to travel on charter flights and minimise contact with the general public, strongly recommending the use of exclusive hotels — to which players will largely be confined — in order to avoid potential cross-contamination. —AFP ■

'We'll learn from this': Chelsea boss Lampard mulls Bayern mauling

MUNICH — Chelsea manager Frank Lampard insists his injury-depleted side will learn from their 4-1 mauling at Bayern Munich to bow out of the Champions League 7-1 on aggregate in the last 16.

Having lost 3-0 to Bayern at Stamford Bridge in the first leg in February, an injury-depleted Chelsea were brushed aside on Saturday as Robert Lewandowski, the Champions League's top-scorer with 13 goals in seven games, netted twice and created two more.

'We'll learn from this': Chelsea coach Frank Lampard shouts instructions Tobias. **PHOTO: SCHWARZ/ AFP**

"It's a good exercise for us to go up against Bayern and their Champions League experience, with a lot of our players having debut seasons," said Lampard.

Chelsea were without the injured Christian Pulisic, Cesar Azpilicueta, Pedro and Willian, while Jorginho and Marcos Alonso were suspended.

"I can see where I want us to go and I know we'll be back," added Lampard.

"When you match our Champions League appearances to theirs, I saw lots of good things in the team and also some of the bad we have seen this season.

"It was a hard start for us with conceding two early goals and the result didn't quite reflect the game, but respect to Bayern, they deserved the win." —AFP ■

Johnson and Koepka set for another PGA final showdown

SAN FRANCISCO — Dustin Johnson shot a 65 Saturday to put himself on course for another mouth-watering final round showdown at a PGA Championship with two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka.

Johnson and Koepka are no strangers at the PGA Championship as Johnson nearly chased down Koepka in the final round last year at New York's Bethpage Black before losing by two shots. "I've been in the hunt a bunch of times in a major. I've got one major, so having that experience is definitely going to be beneficial tomorrow," said 2016 US Open champion Johnson.

Johnson's five-under 65 on Saturday got him to nine under for the tournament and a one-shot lead over fellow Americans Scottie Scheffler and Cameron Champ at TPC Harding Park in San Francisco.

History-chasing American Koepka is tied for fourth with two others, just two strokes back of the long-hitting Johnson.

"I've been in contention a lot, and I've got it done a lot of times," said the 36-year-old Johnson. "I've got to hit fairways and a lot of greens. If I can do that tomorrow, I'm going to have a good chance coming down the stretch on the back nine."

Like rugged Bethpage Black, TPC Harding Park is a municipal layout that is playing like a major championship course with narrow fairways and deep, patchy rough that swallows errant tee shots. —AFP ■