

What's happening in Southeast and East Asia

In
The
News.

6th of July 2021

Philippine military plane crash kills 47 and injures 49 – some jumping out before impact

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules transport aircraft was trying to land on Jolo island in Sulu province when the incident happened. The aircraft had 96 people on board, including three pilots and five crew while the rest were army personnel. Three civilians on the ground were killed

A Philippine Air Force C-130 aircraft carrying combat troops assigned to fight Muslim militants crashed and exploded while landing in the south of the country on Sunday, killing 47 army soldiers and civilians on the ground in one of worst disasters in the air force's history. All 96 passengers have been accounted for, military chief Cirilito Sobejana said on Monday.

Manila pulled out of the ICC in 2019 after the ICC launched a preliminary examination into President Rodrigo Duterte's drug crackdown, but the court said it could still investigate crimes committed while it was a member.

The aircraft had 96 people on board, including three pilots and five crew while the rest were army personnel, the military said, adding only five soldiers remained unaccounted for late on Sunday. The pilots survived but were seriously injured, officials said.

The Lockheed C-130 Hercules was one of two ex-US Air Force aircraft handed over to the Philippines as part of military assistance this year.



Source: Associated Press

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Dozens die in Indonesia hospital with oxygen shortage, as Delta variant sweeps the country

More than 60 people died in a hospital in Indonesia this weekend after oxygen supplies nearly ran out, as the country battles a severe wave of Covid-19 that authorities say is driven by the more infectious Delta variant.

The world's fourth most populous nation is facing one of Asia's worst outbreaks, with a record high of 27,913 new cases reported on Saturday. The islands of Bali and Java -- which includes the capital Jakarta -- went under emergency lockdown Saturday to curb the spread of the resurgent virus.

In a statement, the Sardjito hospital on Java said 63 patients died between Saturday and early Sunday after it nearly exhausted its oxygen supplies.



The hospital said it had sought more oxygen for days before the incident, but virus patients streaming in since Friday had pushed it beyond its capacity, consuming oxygen faster than expected.

In response, the government has asked the gas industry to increase production of medical oxygen, said health ministry official Siti Nadia Tarmizi. "We also hope people don't stock up on oxygen," she added.

Separately, the ministry overseeing Indonesia's Covid-19 response ordered the gas industry to prioritize production to fill estimated demand of 800 metric tons of oxygen each day for medical needs. The industry has idle capacity of 225,000 metric tons a year that can still be used, the ministry added.

Source: CNN News Asia

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In Cambodia, stateless ethnic Vietnamese stuck at border amid Covid-19

Hundreds of ethnic Vietnamese families have been evicted from their homes at Cambodia's Tonle Sap River. Activists say their health and rights are at risk amid rising Covid-19 cases on two sides of the border

Shunned by authorities on both sides of the border, Bach Bai has been relying on the generosity of strangers since his ethnic Vietnamese fishing community was evicted from Cambodia's capital three weeks ago and cast off downstream on their floating homes.

But few are willing to help hundreds of stateless families, who had earned a living breeding fish and hosting tourists on Cambodia's Tonle Sap River, and are now moored to a riverbank a few kilometres from Vietnam, desperate to be allowed inside.

"I was born on the Tonle Sap but I'm told Cambodia is no longer my home," Bai said, squatting on the bow of his tiny vessel in Leuk Daek, about 100km south of Phnom Penh, as his three young children ate noodles and asked reporters for money. "We have no money, no medicine and we are running out of rice ... Vietnam, please, show mercy, allow your children to return to the motherland," he said, after being turned back at the border about two weeks ago.

Some 15 million people worldwide, like Bai, are not recognised as citizens by any country and are increasingly vulnerable with the Covid-19 pandemic, as inequality grows between those with stable work and homes and those without. The mass eviction – one of the largest in years – has drawn condemnation, as daily Covid-19 infections hit new highs in June in both countries.

Source: South China Morning Post



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Malaysia to review recruitment fees, agreements after US human trafficking report

Malaysia will examine recruitment fees charged to workers and review its agreements with the home countries of migrant workers, the Human Resources Ministry said, after the South-east Asian nation was downgraded in a United States human trafficking report.

The US State Department last week ranked Malaysia in "Tier 3" in this year's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) report and said forced labour is the predominant human trafficking crime in the country. Malaysia's Human Resources Ministry said it viewed the issues raised in the TIP report seriously.

"The government will continue to give attention to challenges in addressing forced labour issues, especially those involving foreign workers, and will continue to implement various improvements to existing initiatives," Human Resources Minister Saravanan Murugan said in a statement on Monday (July 5).

The ministry received 4,636 complaints from workers between May and July 4 via a new mobile app, and had taken action in 3,502 cases, including investigating allegations of forced labour, he said. Malaysia depends on about two million documented migrant workers from countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and India to make everything from palm oil to rubber gloves.

Mr Saravanan said the ministry would review the levies imposed by private recruitment agents and check whether there were any hidden charges that might lead to risks of exploitation and debt bondage. "The ministry will also review the memorandum of understanding that has been and will be signed with the source countries, in particular to strengthen the element of protection of worker's rights and, at the same time, not burden employers," he said.



Source: Reuters

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Myanmar forces kill 25, as source reveals raid on Japanese diplomatic staff

A resident of Depayin, north of Mandalay, said the bodies of 25 anti-junta resistance fighters had been recovered following Friday's violence. Meanwhile, a Japanese government source revealed on Sunday that the Yangon homes of diplomatic staff had been raided by security forces in April

Myanmar's security forces killed at least 25 people on Friday in a confrontation with opponents of the military junta, it emerged on Sunday – the same day a Japanese government source revealed that the Yangon homes of Japanese diplomatic staff had been forcibly entered by security forces earlier in the year.

A spokesman for the military did not respond to calls requesting comment on Friday's violence at Depayin in the Sagaing region, about 300km (200 miles) north of the capital, Naypyidaw.



Myanmar's security forces killed at least 25 people on Friday in a confrontation with opponents of the military junta, it emerged on Sunday – the same day a Japanese government source revealed that the Yangon homes of Japanese diplomatic staff had been forcibly entered by security forces earlier in the year. A spokesman for the military did not respond to calls requesting comment on Friday's violence at Depayin in the Sagaing region, about 300km (200 miles) north of the capital, Naypyidaw.

The state-run *Global New Light of Myanmar* said “armed terrorists” had ambushed security forces patrolling the area, killing one of them and wounding six. It said the attackers retreated after retaliation by the security forces. Myanmar has been in a state of chaos since the February 1 coup against elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, with violence flaring in many parts of the country of more than 53 million people.

Source: Reuters and Kyodo News

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Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam says 'ideologies' pose security risk, teenagers need to be monitored

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Tuesday (July 6) "ideologies" posed risks to national security and urged parents, teachers and religious leaders to observe the behaviour of teenagers and report those who break the law to the authorities.

The financial hub has taken a swift authoritarian turn since China's imposition of a sweeping national security law last year and changes to its political system to reduce democratic participation and oust people deemed disloyal to Beijing.

At her weekly news conference, Mrs Lam expressed dismay at some residents mourning the death of a 50-year-old who stabbed a policeman before killing himself on July 1, the anniversary of the former British colony's return to Chinese rule and the Chinese Communist Party's centenary.



"For a long time, citizens have been exposed to wrong ideas, such as achieving justice through illegal means," Mrs Lam told reporters, adding that national security risks stemmed not only from "public order" acts, but also from ideology. The city has been polarised since protesters took to the streets in 2019 demanding greater democracy and accountability for what activists called police violence.

The authorities have said the protests were fuelled by foreign forces and exposed risks to national security. Since the security law was introduced, the most prominent government opponents have been jailed or fled abroad. Critics say the legislation has crushed the city's wide-ranging rights and freedoms, while supporters say it has restored stability.

Source: The Straits Times

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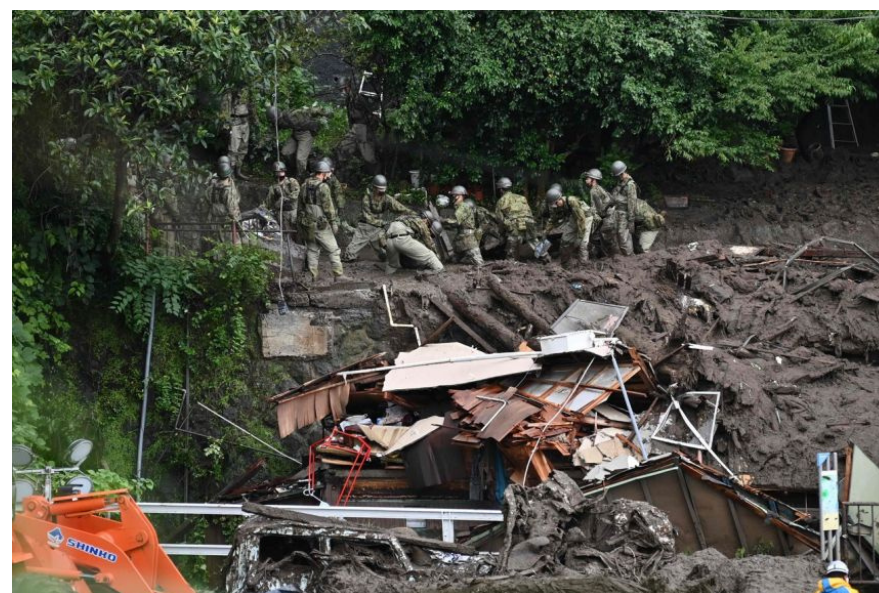
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Rescuers fight time, weather in Japan landslide; some 80 missing

More than a thousand Japanese rescuers combed through crumbled houses and buried roads on Monday (July 5) two days after landslides tore through a seaside city, fighting time and poor weather to search for some 80 people believed missing.

At least three people have been killed in the seaside town of Atami after torrential rains at the weekend – more than a usual July's worth in 24 hours some areas – touched off a succession of landslides, sending torrents of mud and rock ripping through streets.

The landslides are a reminder of the natural disasters – including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and tsunami – that haunt Japan, where the capital Tokyo is to host the summer Olympics beginning this month.



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By Monday, the number of rescuers at the site had risen to 1,500, officials said, and could increase. "We want to rescue as many victims... buried in the rubble as soon as possible," Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga told reporters, adding that police, firefighters and members of the military were giving their all to do so. There are 113 people believed missing in Atami, a city of almost 36,000 people situated 90km south-west of Tokyo, spokesperson Hiroki Onuma told Reuters, confirming the third death.

Source: Reuters

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Migrant workers in Taiwan allege discrimination as Covid-19 hits tech industry

Migrant workers in Taiwan are crying foul over recent restrictions imposed on them to contain a rise in Covid-19 cases in the tech industry. Many say they are victims of discrimination.

"We can't even go out and buy food and necessities but the Taiwanese can. How is that fair?" said Ms Thuy Binh, a Vietnamese migrant worker at a King Yuan Electronics factory in Miaoli county.

The majority of tech companies, which play a key part in Taiwan's booming chip industry, have most of their factories located in the western counties of Miaoli and Hsinchu. King Yuan Electronics, a chip packaging company, was in the headlines last month after at least four of its factories in Miaoli county were affected by Covid-19 involving migrant workers.

Within a week, the number of infected employees grew from 45 to over 300, more than two-thirds of whom were migrant workers from the Philippines, Vietnam and Indonesia. Figures from the Ministry of Labour Affairs show there are currently about 713,000 migrant workers in Taiwan, with at least 60 per cent of them working in the manufacturing sector.

Although it is unclear how many are supporting the tech industry, the world's biggest semiconductor assembly company Advanced Semiconductor Engineering currently employs around 10,000 migrant workers, which makes up almost 20 per cent of its entire workforce. King Yuan has 2,000 such workers. Taiwan is currently under level three alert which does not restrict people from going out. Among other things, masks are mandatory, social gatherings are restricted to five people indoors and 10 outdoors, and indoor dining at food and beverage sectors have been suspended.



Source: The Straits Times